

Church was an important part of the lives of residents in Williams Bay. The first organized church in the Village was the Free Evangelical Lutheran Church on the southwest corner of Geneva and Williams Streets, formed in 1891. Many of the early Bay residents had a strong Scandinavian heritage and because of this, services in Swedish and Norwegian were alternated weekly. For this reason the church became known as the Scandinavian Church.

A small church west of the village on North Walworth Road, near the intersection with highway 67 and County Road F, served residents who wanted services in English. In November of 1895, this group of Williams Bay residents arranged to hold services on Sunday afternoon at the Scandinavian Church led by Rev. M. N. Clark from the Walworth Congregational Church. This move may have been made for convenience. Since the decision was made in November, it may have been due to the difficulty of winter travel.

Only a month later a Ladies Aid Society was formed. One year later in December 1896 the congregation voted to build their own church, purchasing a lot on the northwest corner of Geneva and Valley Streets from Mrs. Lucretia Williams, widow of Royal Williams. The new Congregational Church building was dedicated in August of 1901.

The Free Evangelical Lutheran Church or Scandinavian Church was reorganized in 1921 as the Free Mission Church lead by Michael T. Peterson. The building was enlarged and dedicated in July 1921. In 1922 the name of the church was changed to Gospel Tabernacle.

East Delavan Baptist Church was the first church in our area. It was formed on February 14, 1845, with Reverend Henry Topping being the first pastor and 17 charter members. The congregation first met in the log school house at East Delavan and erected the first church building in 1846.

Another early church was formed in 1885 at the home of Anthony Delap at DeLap's Corner (the corner of highways 67 and 50). The building was built in 1888 by members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus of the Latter-Day Saints on land donated by member Henry Southwick. The humble little white church with a modest tablet above the door that read: L.D.S. and a belfry with a bell that called members to worship sat at the edge of Southwick's farm on the top of the hill north of Williams Bay.

In October of 1949 Twelve families gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Tolin, and with the leadership of Reverend Norman Nelson of the Sugar Creek Lutheran Church, organized the Williams Bay Lutheran Church. The first Sunday service was held on November 6 with 37 worshippers present with Reverend Nelson serving both churches. On November 13 the first Sunday School session was held with eleven pupils and four teachers. All services were held in the Community Room of Barrett Memorial Library with the use of all fold-away furniture made by the men of the congregation.

The lots at the corner of Congress and Collie Streets were purchased from the Holmquist property for \$1,200 and a groundbreaking ceremony was held on May 24, 1953. The cornerstone was laid by charter member Mr. D.J. Ostjen. The new church was dedicated on July 17, 1955