

St. Bonaventure's Catholic church is situated in the hamlet of Raeville. It is located on the northern part of Boone County, Nebraska. The church and community have a long history. The Rae Brothers who emigrated from Canada to Omaha founded the community. A land agent there told them of Boone County, a land "flowing with milk and honey." Taking his advice and knowing of the future railroad development to the area, they headed to the area in 1872. The first settlers of the area arrived in 1875. Times were tough but they persevered. More settlers arrived in the early eight's and ninety's.

The Rev. Wunibald Wolf held the first Catholic service in the Bremer sod house in 1881. By 1882, forty acres of land were purchased and the first church was built. It was approximately 24x36 feet and the first mass was held in February 1882. Mass was held once a month. The community grew and the need for a new church was presented to the parishioners. The second church was constructed from 1888-1889. The first church was attached and served as the sacristy and priest's room. The new building was 32x50 feet and in 1892 a full time priest was assigned to the community. The communities of Petersburg, Elgin, and St. Edward became missionary churches at this time to St. Bonaventure's. The need for an addition to the church was addressed in 1900 with an addition that cost \$2000.

Catholic churches would eventually be built in Petersburg, Elgin, and St. Ed to address the needs of a growing population but by 1917, the need to build a bigger church was addressed. Mr. J. M. Nachtigal of Omaha designed the church, which Raeville is known for. The construction took two years and cost the community between \$85,000 - \$100,000. The windows were imported from Germany, the interior was originally painted by Conrad Schmitt firm of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and the alter, pulpit, and communion railing were constructed by the Hackner Company of LaCrosse, Wisconsin. The building originally housed a pipe organ.

The parish has been diligent in preserving this building. The twin bell towers have been repaired and reroofed, two new roofs have been put on to replace the original Ludivici tile, tuck pointing has been completed, protective covers have been placed over the spectacular stain glass windows, plaster has been repaired or replaced and the interior of the church has been restored to it's original colors and stenciling.