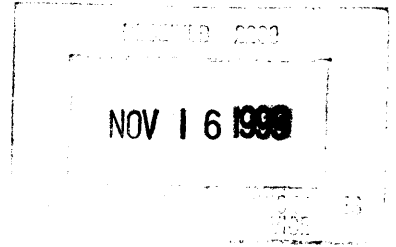


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

1582



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Methodist Episcopal Church of Wessington Springs
other names/site number First United Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number SE Corner of Main and State Street not for publication
city or town Wessington Springs vicinity
state South Dakota code SD county Jerauld code 073 zip code 57832

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jay D. Vogt
Signature of certifying official

10-22-99
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register.
- other,

(explain:)

Free
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 12.17.99

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Religion Sub: Religious Facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Religion Sub: Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian-Late Gothic Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
roof Asphalt Shingle
walls Brick

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture _____

Period of Significance

1913 _____

Significant Dates 1913

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Kirby J. Snyder

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

Methodist Episcopal Church of Wessington Springs

Name of Property

Jerauld County, South Dakota

County and State

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name South Dakota Conference of First United Methodist Church

street & number P.O. Box 460 telephone _____

city or town Mitchell State SD zip code 57301

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Narrative Description

The Methodist Episcopal Church of Wessington Springs is located on the Southwest corner of Main and State Street in Wessington Springs. The area is predominantly rural with most of the homes located outside the downtown area. The church sits prominently on Main Avenue across the street from the Carnegie Library and City Park. Kirby Snyder of Minnesota designed the Methodist Episcopal Church in Wessington Springs in 1913. It is constructed of brown brick in the Gothic style.

Exterior

The church is laid out in a Latin cross with the short arms being the nave and transept. The foundation measures approximately 86 feet by 86 feet and is a massive concrete support for the structure. There is a limestone water table above the foundation. The walls are constructed of brown brick and are adorned with large stained glass windows displaying Christian symbols. Two wings at right angles to each other come together to form a higher pitched roof directly over the domed sanctuary. The roof has intersecting gables on a hipped roof, which was originally covered in slate but currently has asphalt shingles. On the southwest corner, is a square bell-tower that is typical of a Snyder designed church building, a feature that he utilized on many of his church buildings.

The north, south, and west gable ends of the church are identical in design. Located in the gable ends is one large gothic arched stained glass window flanked by two thinner gothic arched stained glass windows. On either side of the large Gothic arched window is a brick buttress capped with limestone accents. Above each window is a brick drip molding. The large gothic arch windows is divided into smaller gothic arched panes of glass. The first section has a larger window with a smaller one on either side. Above each of these windows is a series of smaller, thinner windows. Above the large gothic arched window, in the gable peak, on the east and south elevation, is a stained glass cross. At the same location, on the north and west elevation is a thin, rectangular stained glass window.

The east elevation is similar in design. The only difference is that the large gothic arched window is flanked by one thinner gothic arched stained glass window.

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The southwest corner of the building has a 40 feet high bell-tower that measures 20 feet by 20 feet. The belltower is divided into three sections. The first section features the two main entries. Entry is gained by ascending a short flight of concrete stairs to an open porch. Originally, these porches had a pole lamp on the banisters of each porch. After the advent of street lighting, removal of the pole lamps occurred. A massive precast stone encasement surrounds each of the two main entry sections around the doors. The opening is a gothic arch which allows for a four pane gothic arched transom and two wood doors. The first and second section of the bell-tower is divided by a brick and limestone belt course. The second section features a set of three arched stained glass windows on each side. The windows have limestone sills and are topped with curved brick lintels. The third section has a large gothic arched opening. In this opening are two wood framed openings with a balustrade. The opening has a limestone sill and a curved brick drip molding. Above the third section is a brick and limestone frieze, which is capped with a brick parapet.

Located between the belltower and the gables is a shed roof entrance which leads to the lower level and main floor. The opening is a gothic arch with a three pane transom and a wood door with three windows.

At the northwest corner of the north elevation, is a recessed, one story room. It has a shed roof with a parapet. This room has a window opening which features a large central plate glass window flanked by one-over-one double hung windows. Above each window is a fixed pane window.

The north elevation of the church has four, block glass windows in the foundation. These provide light to the basement level. Also on this elevation is an additional narrow stained glass window towards the northwest corner of the building.

The east elevation has six one-over-one double hung windows below the water table in the foundation. These provide light to the basement level.

Like the south elevation, the east elevation has a recessed, one story room at the southeast corner. It has a shed roof with a brick parapet. This room has a window opening on the south side which features a large central plate glass window flanked by one-over-one double hung windows. Above each window is a fixed pane window. On the east side is a pair of one-over-one double hung windows with a transom above each. In the foundation of this section are two fixed pane windows. To the east of this room is a shed roof addition that was completed in 1976. This two story addition has a stairway that leads to the main floor entry. Beside the stairway is a door, which leads to the

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basement. It was constructed with similar brown brick and has the same details of the water table and foundation.

Interior

The main entry is gained through the bell-tower entrances. From the narthex, is an entry to the basement stairway, the chapel on the south side, the Sunday School room and the main sanctuary. Just before the entry to the sanctuary is a groin arch with a five globe light unit in the center.

The main sanctuary entrance is in the southwest corner of the room with the pulpit in the opposite corner. The pews are arranged in a radius from the pulpit and have a seating capacity of 400. The west and south walls of the sanctuary feature movable walls that allow for more seating during church services. The original plan called for hinged folding doors between the two areas. The actual design chosen was to build walls, which would be raised up into a pocket. This system involved cables, pulleys and counterweights typical of systems used to raise drawbridges. The walls are adorned with oak paneling with gothic arches filled with burlap. The wall system is still in use today, and shows creativeness, originality and desire for efficiency on the part of the members of the church.

An oak communion rail graces, beautifies and otherwise enhances the radius along the pulpit front. The communion rail has a gothic design influences. The rail is circular with a 16 foot radius having a continuous bottom rail of oak upon which is set oak columns with eight inch spacing. The columns have a square base and capitol with turned center sections. The choir loft is located on the east end of the sanctuary and begins just behind the pulpit.

The center of the sanctuary ceiling features a stained glass dome. The dome is nine feet in diameter and nine feet in height. The dome is surrounded by an artistic trim section, which extends the dome area to fifteen feet. From the center of the dome a pendant of five chained frosted globes adds to the general lighting. Twenty additional frosted globe lights are chain suspended from the trim section to the base of the dome. The dome is also back lit with eight light bulbs. Six other five bulb frosted globe fixtures are chain suspended from the ceiling, making up the original lighting. Four large gothic arched stained glass windows also grace the sanctuary.

From the belltower entry, the basement stairs terminate in a hallway at the mezzanine level. This level has two Sunday school rooms and a room at the base of the belltower. Also, at the mezzanine

Methodist Episcopal Church of Wessington Springs
Name of Property

Jerauld County, South Dakota
County and State

NPS FORM 10-900-A
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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level are the restrooms and the back staircase, which leads to the sanctuary. Six more steps from the mezzanine level lead down into Wesley Hall, the basement.

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Statement of Significance

The Methodist Episcopal Church of Wessington Springs, located on the corner of Main and State Street, is eligible under Criterion C for its Gothic style architecture and its peculiar engineering interior wall design. The church was placed at a prominent site, an elevation above the surrounding buildings, so that all parts of the building could be admired.

Historical Background

As the year 1909 began, real estate was in great demand in Jerauld County and many new settlers came to try their fortunes in the "land of plenty." In March of 1909, twenty-three cars of immigrants arrived in Wessington Springs in one day. During the early part of that month, one hundred and twenty-three cars of new settlers came of the railroad. This started a large influx of immigration to Jerauld County.¹ Jerauld County experience much prosperity during the early part of the 1910's and this is reflected in the construction of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Wessington Springs.

The architect for the church was Kirby T. Snyder. He designed church buildings as far away as Texas, however, twenty-two are documented in the region of Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. Fourteen of these twenty-two buildings are Methodist Episcopal. The Wessington Springs United Methodist Church completed construction in 1913 as a culmination of the vision, hope and faith of the Methodist families that settled in Wessington Springs.

The architect designed his gothic churches to sit on corners that formed part of a rectangular grid of city streets. This resulted in the church having two facades. This building is typical of the 19th and 20th century revival Gothic architecture but is distinctive to Wessington Springs. No other structure in the town is designed in this style or with such attention to Christian symbolism.

The building features many of the elements commonly found in Late Gothic Revival architecture. Late Gothic Revival buildings commonly used brick as a wall surface and were accented by lancet windows with stone tracery. The Methodist Episcopal Church of Wessington Springs employed these common elements to their church. Other elements employed on the Methodist Church include: brick buttresses, pointed stained glass windows, a complex roof form, a massive tower and

¹ Fred Dunham, *A History of Jerauld County South Dakota 1909-1961*, (Wessington Springs, SD 1963), 7.

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restrained decorative details. What makes these elements significant for Wessington Springs is that no other structure in the town or vicinity used Late Gothic Revival as a style in construction.

Also significant to the building are the brilliantly colored stained glass windows, which were designed by the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company. Each of the four side walls have a large gothic framed stained glass window area divided into clusters. The focal point of the opening is a gothic stained glass area with a narrower stained glass window on each side taking up the entire width. Above this section is eight narrow gothic arched stained glass windows which are topped with eight irregularly shaped stained glass areas. The south, west and north end walls have four tall, narrow single gothic arched windows. The east side wall only has two of these windows, one in each room beside the choir loft.

The stained glass windows are significant to the church for both their design and architecture. Each of the large stained glass windows are generalized in theme with some variation. The south side window has as its theme the promise and hope of salvation. The focal point of the large center window is the light from the star over Bethlehem. Below the star is the town in its quiet night state. To the left of the main window is another window depicting the Bible with two white lilies and to the right is a window with five white lilies. The blossoms possess regular symmetry.

The stained glass window on the east wall of the sanctuary is symbolic of praise and Christian life. The window is a reflection of the famous painting by the German painter, Bernard Plockhorst, *The Good Shepherd*. It represents a calm, pastoral scene isolated from the troubles of the world with Jesus holding a shepherd's crook in one hand and looking down affectionately at a lamb in the other hand. To the left of the main window is another depicting an arm and hand holding a lighted torch, with the inscription "The Lord is my Light." To the right of the main window is one depicting an anchor with a rope attached symbolizing the strength of belief.

The stained glass window on the north wall is symbolic of love and sacrifice. The main portion of the window is a reproduction of *Christ in Gethsemane* by Heinrich Hoffman. To the right of the main window is another depicting a grain bundle with rake and the stained glass window to the left of the main window is of the Bible with the seven bookmarks. The bookmarks are a symbol of the sins of Man and his salvation.

Finally, the west wall stained glass windows are a reflection of penitence and resurrection. The main window is of a lighted lamp. To the right of the main window is a tall crown with violet colored insets

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and the stained glass window to the left of the main window is a crown of thorns symbolizing Christ's suffering.

Other significant Christian symbols can be seen throughout the church building. These include the use of important numbers such as two, three, four and seven, the use of the Pentateuch, regeneration symbols and the reflection of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The church also features an unusual construction design in the interior of the building. The architect had originally planned for two of the interior walls to be folding doors so that if more room was needed during worship services, they could be opened to allow for more seating. After this option was considered, there was a change in the plans. The doors instead would retract up into the ceiling of the sanctuary so that they would not be in the direct line of vision. This is a feature that is distinct to the Methodist Episcopal Church of Wessington Springs. No other building in Jerauld County utilizes this system.

The church retains a high degree of architectural integrity and has suffered few alterations. The simple addition to the rear of the structure in 1976 included a needed handicap accessible entrance. It was constructed with similar brown brick and has the same details of the water table and foundation. Few examples of this style with such a high degree of integrity remain in the state of South Dakota and no other example exists in Wessington Springs.

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Bibliography

Dunham, F.N. *A History of Jerauld County South Dakota, 1909-1961*. Wessington Springs, 1963.

Jerauld County Review. January 1913-January 1914. Wessington Springs, South Dakota.

Perry, Stephen. *The Urbanization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Jerauld County, South Dakota, in the Early Twentieth Century*. Unpublished. 1999.

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 13, block 8, of original town of Wessington Springs, Jerauld County SD according to City plot plan. Lot size 22 ft. by 134 ft. Deed dated Jan, 10, 1905.

All of lots 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14 of block 8, of original town of Wessington Springs, Jerauld County SD according to City plot plan. All lots 22 ft. by 134 ft. Deed dated Jan, 10, 1905.

Lots 7 and 8 of block 8 of original town of Wessington Springs, Jerauld County SD according to City plot plan. All lots 22 ft. by 134 ft. Deed dated Sept. 21, 1907.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the building and the surrounding grounds.