

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 10 1984
date entered NOV 13 1984

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Methodist Episcopal Church, South, ~~Checotah~~

and/or common First United Methodist Church, Checotah

2. Location

street & number 419 W. Gentry St. N/A not for publication

city, town Checotah vicinity of

state Oklahoma code 40 county McIntosh code 091

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Trustees, First United Methodist Church

street & number 419 West Gentry

city, town Checotah vicinity of state Oklahoma 744 26

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk's Office, McIntosh County Courthouse

street & number 110 N. First Street

city, town Eufaula state Oklahoma

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Oklahoma Comprehensive Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Oklahoma Historical Society, Preservation Office

city, town Oklahoma City state Oklahoma

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Built of smooth-faced red brick made from a small local vein of clay, Checotah's First United Methodist Church rises two stories from its five-row limestone watertable in a Federalist Revival style. Its cross gables form pediments on a low-pitched, central-hipped roof which is topped by a 12-sided lantern showing rectangular lights. The west pediment has a half-round fan light. Near the entrance is the cornerstone, "M. E. Church, So., 1917." The hilltop landscaping, flattened brick pilasters, gutter downspouts, and the panels of stained glass windows (5 stationary, 8 triple-sashed, and 6 double-sashed types) accentuate the height of the structure. These panels vertically pair stained glass windows with white painted wooden frames and dividers. The roofline is marked by a double stringcourse of bricks which merges with the pilaster capitals. The uncluttered view of construction shows both tooled and rusticated foundation stones using beaded mortar. The northern (rear) boundary is marked by a covered walk between the nominated structure and classrooms added later.

The sanctuary is highlighted by a unique corner pulpit from which four aisles radiate reminiscent of early "meetinghouse" styles. It rises two stories with a curved balcony surrounding the rear sides of the sanctuary. All millwork and furniture are of oak. The plank floors are white pine. The stained glass windows highlight the interior. These elements provide a contrast of light and shadow which emphasize line, not detailing, giving the interior a stark, clean, Quaker-like appearance.

Changes to the structure have been minimal and in keeping with the original design. To conserve energy and to allow the installation of recessed lighting, the lantern has been sealed off with acoustical ceiling panels. In an effort to preserve the building, the stained glass windows have been releaded, the sills strengthened, and the panes covered with protective storm glass. When the choir stalls were relocated, the original paneling was retained and reused. Original pews (from Jackson, Tennessee), wood flooring, three Jacobean pulpit chairs and table (ordered from New York), support columns, bannisters and altar rails still help the interior retain its original character, one which reflects the affluence of the town prior to World War I.

These minor alterations have not seriously affected the historic/architectural integrity of the structure.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1917 **Builder/Architect** John Gaisford, Memphis, Tenn. (Architect)
William Alston, Wagoner, Ok. (Builder)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The First United Methodist Church in Checotah is the sole surviving example of a Federalist-Revival design that was used during the early twentieth century for Methodist Churches in eastern OK. Of the three known structures designed with the same plan in Oklahoma, this building is the only one still intact. Other churches were designed with similar interiors, utilizing the corner pulpit, but no others remain in north-central Oklahoma.

Use of its hilltop setting began in 1890 when the mission of the Checote Circuit in the Creek Nation of Indian Territory began holding regular services at this site. The region was still mostly farm and range land at that time, but a railhead had been established and a town was beginning to develop. The church grew with the community and by 1915 the congregation began planning to replace its wooden building with a more imposing structure. By 1917 the present building was completed, costing almost \$15,000, a substantial investment for the young community. This imposing red-brick Federalist-Revival church (44 x 71 feet) reflects an adaptation to the small town's needs. While giving an impressive exterior appearance due to its hilltop location and its angular lines, the structure maintains a simplicity in decorative detailing. Clay from the northeastern corner of town had been dug up and hauled to Muskogee where it was made into the bricks that grace the facades of the church, but the congregation made a considerable investment in acquiring Carthage limestone for the exterior detailing, especially the high stone watertable.

The grandeur and dignity reflective of the Federalist-Revival styling is modified and simplified to the use of key elements (a practice common to the early twentieth century buildings in small towns of Oklahoma): the symmetrical appearances of the street facades, the pedimented porticos, the flattened pilasters, an entablature, and the lantern. The simplicity in decorative detailing is maintained throughout the interior, using the stained glass windows, oak millwork, pine plank floors, curved pews, and corner pulpit with radiating aisles and semicircular balcony to reflect the elegance desired. The 19 stained glass windows are the most elegant feature of the interior, providing both light and color as well as visual images in the form of New Testament teachings and floral designs reminiscent of Art Nouveau. The use of the corner pulpit and simplified designs was common to many Methodist churches, commonly referred to as the "meetinghouse" style, which tried to visually separate their churches from the imagery and ritual that had come to be associated with Roman Catholicism.

The church continues as a focal point for the community and the congregation has great pride in maintaining their historic structure.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property under one acre

Quadrangle name Checotah, Okla.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	5	2	7	0	9	4	0	3	9	2	7	9	7	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 7 in Block 66, City of Checotah, Oklahoma

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title George Lee Stidham
Chairman, Admin. Bd. & Karen Bode Curths
organization First United Preservation date August 1, 1984
Methodist Church Consultant (918) 473-6222 /
street & number 606 S.W. Second 316 S. Burdick telephone (918) 473-2237 / (405) 377-8076
city or town Checotah Stillwater state Oklahoma

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature C. E. Metcalf date 9/27/84

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Reth Grosvenor date 11/23/84
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration