

HISTORIC NAME: First Baptist Church  
 ADDRESS: 120 S. Grand, Bozeman  
 LEGAL BOUNDARY: Alderson's Addition,  
 Blk B, Lots 11-14  
 OWNER'S NAME: First Baptist Church  
 R.C. Stewart, et al.  
 OWNER ADDRESS: 120 S. Grand, Bozeman  
 SPECIFIC DATE: 1911  
 ARCHITECT: Fred Willson  
 BUILDER: Unknown  
 ORIGINAL OWNER: First Baptist Church  
 ORIGINAL USE: church  
 PRESENT USE: church  
 UTM REFERENCE: 12/496960/5058030  
 ACREAGE: less than one  
 U.S.G.S. QUAD: Bozeman, 1953



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Applicable Criteria: A and C

Areas of significance: social history, architecture

Number of Contributing Properties: 1

The First Baptist Church is a highly distinctive example of early 20th Century, Gothic Revival style church architecture, and is representative of the overall cultural diversification that accompanied the arrival of the railroad in Bozeman. During the same year the railroad arrived, 1883, Reverend L.S. Wood organized Baptist Churches in Townsend, Bozeman, and Livingston, on a trip from Helena that was intended to find all Baptists in the eastern two-thirds of Montana. The number of Baptists in Bozeman may have increased as a result of the economic growth brought on by the railroad. Reverend Byron Morse, a friend of Wood's, was enlisted to lead the Bozeman congregation. In December, 1883, the first services were held in a private home, in Chesnut Hall (located in the first log structure built on Main Street), and in a hall in the Courier Building. The following year a small log church was built on E. Babcock Street, and remained in use until 1911, when this church was built. The new church was designed by Fred Willson, who was just beginning his architectural career in Bozeman. In 1915, the First Baptist Church of Bozeman was incorporated with 100 members.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

This brick church has a rectangular plan with a projecting square tower at the entry with a crenelated parapet. The one-bay facade is asymmetrical and consists of one-over-one double-hung windows at the daylight basement level and an enormous Gothic arched stained glass window in the center that has heavy wooden tracery in a Gothic and lancet arch pattern. Fixed, rectangular, stained glass windows with brick buttresses between each set of three windows run down the southern and northern elevators. The stained glass windows have plexiglass storms. There is a second, double wooden door entrance on the west facade with a Gothic arch transom above. The brick construction is of a running bond pattern and consists of corbeled stretcher over soldier, over corbeled header to form a water table. The gable roof is covered with light grey asphalt shingles and features a small dormer with stained glass insets and a large round ventilator on the gable peak.

In 1958 major interior alterations were made. The large, non-contributing brick stairway was presumably added to the front at that time. During more recent years, a handicapped access ramp has been built up to the north doorway of the front facade. Despite these two changes, the building retains an overall high degree of historic architectural integrity.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Bozeman Daily Chronicle, Centennial Edition, March 31, 1983, Part V, p.4  
John N. DeHaas, personal communication with Patricia Bick, 5/22/87.

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