

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

985

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 an 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 10-900e). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name First Methodist Episcopal Church
other names/site number Kensett United Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number 401 2nd St. N/A not for publication
city or town Kensett N/A vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Worth code 195 zip code 50448

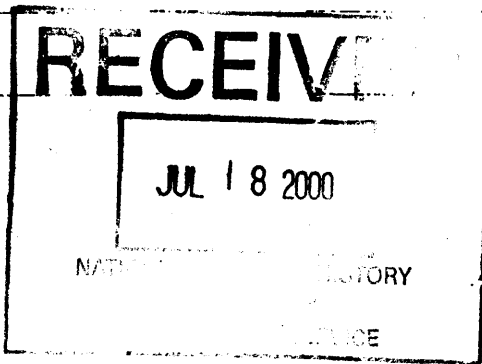
3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)
Patticia Ann Kim DS/TPD Date 7-14-00
Signature of certifying official/Title
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA
State of 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 official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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) _____
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 8/16/00



Name of Property
First Methodist Episcopal Church

County and State
Worth Iowa

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
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
One		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
One		Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Zero

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/museum
Work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian/Gothic

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone- limestone
walls Wood - Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Period of Significance

1899-1950

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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.

Significant Dates

1899

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Bullder

Kinney, F.W.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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:

Church Archives-local

Name of Property
First Methodist Episcopal Church

Worth Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property less than one (1) acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 482881 4799690
Zone Easting Northing

3

--	--	--	--	--	--

4

--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mr. H. Stanley Lucas (member)

organization Worth County Historical Society date Jan. 30, 2000

street & number 4150 B. Orchid telephone 515-845-2304

city or town Kensett state IA zip code 50448

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name Worth County Historical Society

street & number 921 Central Ave telephone none

city or town Northwood state IA zip code 50459

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 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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1

First Methodist Episcopal Church
Worth County, Iowa

Description:

The structure was planned by a local architect and built by local contractors. All craftsmen and laborers were from within the community. The building is of wood frame construction. The property is currently in fair condition. It has been maintained, repaired, and adapted to accommodate changing needs. The First Methodist Episcopal Church is a white building with horizontal drop siding, located on two lots in Kensett, Iowa, Worth County. The gable roof runs in a north-south direction. The main gable has two transepts which intersect near the back(north side) of the building. Both transepts end with a hip roof. Atop the main gable, at the front of the church, sits an open bell tower with a pyramidal hipped roof. Near the peak at each end of the main gable, is a circular window. The roof of the building has asphalt composition shingles. Beneath the roof are open eaves all around.

The main entrance porch has a gabled roof which faces south toward 2nd Street. There is a small rectangular window under each eave of the main entrance porch. The main entrance is reached by a series of concrete steps. These steps were constructed in the early 1950's when some modifications were made to the church and the basement. The foundation of the church is constructed of rough cut coursed limestone.

The wing running to the east has a cement slab deck and an auxiliary entrance. Above that entrance door, which faces south, is a Gothic window. The east wing has two large Gothic windows which face the east.

The west wing has no exterior entrance. It has two large Gothic windows which face the west. It also has a Gothic window which faces the north.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

The north exterior of the church has an apse projecting from the nave choir loft area. This apse has a small rectangular window on each side that projects from the main building.

The interior nave of the church is 26 by 40 feet. It is covered with a pressed decorative metal. The metal completely covers all walls and ceiling in the nave. The walls extend upward eleven feet with an interior vaulted ceiling going up another eight feet. The floor of the nave slopes down from the main entrance toward the choir-pulpit area. A one step rise (approximately 9 inches) places you in the choir-pulpit area. The size of the choir-pulpit space is 26 by 9 feet. The apse is immediately behind the choir area. The size of the apse is 13 by 4 feet. The apse is set off by a curved semi-circular arch. The arch goes over the entire opening of the apse and extends upward 12 feet.

Both wings are separated from the nave by folding doors which can provide an unobstructed view of the choir-pulpit area. The wings can be used in case of overflow crowds such as at weddings and funerals. The east wing is 11 by 14 feet. It contains a stairwell going down into the basement. This stairwell was part of the 1950's renovation. The west wing is 11 by 18 feet. A restroom was added into this area, thus removing a space of 7 by 6 feet. The main entryway porch, on the south end of the nave, is 5 by 9 feet.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

First Methodist Episcopal Church
Worth County, Iowa
Statement of Significance (continued)

The First Methodist Episcopal Church is historically significant under Criterion A for its association with the development of the community and central Worth County, in the later part of the 19th century and early 20th century. Since its construction in 1899 the church has served the community and the congregation as a place of worship, a meeting place for community service clubs, a gathering point for county and area information, and a place for social events. The building was used by the local Lions Club as a monthly meeting place. The church ladies served supper and business was conducted. The Worth County Women's Chorus used the church on a regular basis for choir practice. The Worth County Extension office frequently held meetings of interest and concern for farmers.

The wood frame building has been maintained and preserved. It still retains all of the interior church accutremments and is currently being converted into a church-community museum.

Historical Background and Significance

In particular, the origin of the church goes back to the language differences within the community that separated the Scandinavian and English speaking people.

In 1870 a railroad was constructed through the community of Kensett. The community was organized in 1872. During that period of rapid growth from about 1860-1890 many immigrants were moving into the community and the rural area. The Norwegian immigrants settled in the community and on the prairie immediately west of Kensett. Those groups were quick to establish church affiliations. The immigrants from Western Europe settled east of Kensett and formed German speaking congregations in that area. South of Kensett was being populated by Eastern Europeans who formed a Bohemian speaking congregation in the town of Manly. Meanwhile, the local power brokers of Kensett, the store managers, feed mill operators, livery stable operators, funeral parlor persons, and other allied business men and workers, were immigrants or descendents from the English speaking countries. In the year 1893 a Lutheran church was built within the community of Kensett. Already a number of rural Lutheran churches had been built within close proximity of Kensett. The spoken language in those churches was Norwegian. As the English speaking people could not understand that language, they felt a need for an English speaking church in the community.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4First Methodist Episcopal Church
Worth County, Iowa

Historical Background and Significance (continued)

Some of the English speaking people were being served by a circuit rider from the community of Plymouth, Iowa. This circuit rider met with groups in the rural Hildreth, Wagner, and Kensett school houses. In 1894 there is a record of members who were interested in establishing a Methodist Episcopal Church. At the close of that conference year (1894), a record of twelve members plus two probationers plus another nine members and one probationer showed an interest in forming a church. In 1895 two of the groups became part of an organized circuit. During that year (1894), Mrs. John Dawson, the preachers wife, organized the W.F.M.S. (Women for the First Methodist Society)

At the end of the 1896 conference year, Pastor John Dawson was reappointed for another year. The Kensett Charge was awarded the Banner Charge of the District for having exceeded its memberships and givings. The circuit rider arrangement continued into 1897, 1898, and 1899. In June of 1899, at a quarterly conference held in Kensett, it was decided to elect a Board of Trustees to explore the possibility of erecting a church in Kensett. That first Board of Trustees was Mr. W.B. Hildreth, Mr. George A. Overholt, Mr. Charles Locke, Mr. Howard Cady, and a Mr. A.C. Foster. In April of 1899 the Trustees decided to hire an architect and find a location for the church. Mr. F.W. Kinney, an architect from Austin, Minnesota submitted plans and specifications for a building that would cost \$1500.00 complete. Plans were accepted and Mr. Kinney was paid \$15.00 for the plans and specifications. A lot was purchased in Kensett from a Mrs. Etta Finch for \$75.00. Mrs. Finch was a member of the church and she also donated a second lot. Mr. Kringlen Thoen was awarded the carpentry contract at a bid of \$350.00. Mr. O.L. Bashford submitted a low bid of \$157.00 for all of the concrete and masonry work. The digging for the foundation was started immediately. By August of 1899 the trustees were informed that an additional cost for a bell tower would increase the total amount to \$2509.78

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5First Methodist Episcopal Church
Worth County, Iowa

Historical Background and Significance (continued)

Prior to the letting of the bids and the actual construction of the building, the trustees felt an immediate need for some type of financing arrangement. The trustees each made a list of all people whom they would personally contact and ask for financial assistance. The main thrust of the drive was to contact people and businesses in the community of Kensett. In all, over 130 people and organizations agreed to take a "subscription" of from \$1.00 to \$20.00 and upward. Most of the "subscriptions" were in the \$2.00 to \$10.00 range. If people could not pay cash they would donate labor, and businesses would discount that amount from their merchandise.

By September of 1899 the Trustees were ready to install a furnace in the new basement. A bid of \$150.00 for a new furnace was accepted from the Savre Brothers Hardware. Furnace and fuel were immediately put into the basement. In October of 1899 the church pews were selected and installed in the church building. Most of the construction bills were submitted and paid in November of 1899. The board secretary was instructed to purchase an additional 50 chairs at a total cost of \$22.50. The first church service was held in October of 1899. The record does not indicate that a specific dedication was held at that date. The Baptismal Records show that a Winnie Elizabeth Hildreth and a Wambeam boy were the first babies to be baptised in the church in October of 1899.

The organization of the Methodist Women's Society (under various names) was very active in the operation of the church. Over the next 90 years the womens organizations continued to schedule social events, have fund raising projects, serve meals to community service organizations, and take care of the Sunday School Services.

From 1900 until 1910 the church experienced much growth. Shortly after 1910 Worth County began to lose population. Records today indicate that this rural county reached its peak population during the decade of 1890-1900. By 1917 the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 6First Methodist Episcopal Church
Worth County, Iowa

Historical Background and Significance (continued)

church population had declined to a point where further operations looked very dismal. From the early 1920's until the 1950's the church was operated on an infrequent basis. The Methodist women continued to meet as an organization. The church was closed during the winter months and served by a student pastor during the summer months. In the early 1950's a revitalization occurred. Several families expressed an interest in maintaining a regular service throughout the year. At the same time a need was expressed to update and modernize the interior of the church. The basement needed to be expanded, and a full service kitchen needed to be added. Water, sewer, and lights were updated or added. A committee of LaVain Pavlik, Gerald Sparks, Maurice Stevens, Stanley Lucas, Charles Mitchell and Monroe Boyette were appointed to oversee the remodeling. A Mr. Art Martin was appointed Finance Chairman. At a total cost of \$5,972.32 a complete kitchen and other conveniences were added. The Methodist Aid Society began serving meals for community service organizations, and county and community groups used the new facilities for a regular meeting place.

During that period of the late 1950's and into the 1980's the church experienced some growth and stability. However, at some period of time in the 1980's, our general culture began to change with respect to church attendance. Families began to find other things to do on Sunday mornings. The church went into decline, young people moved out of this small community and into the larger urban areas, Sunday School attendance plummeted. Early in the 1990's we began to realize that our church was destined for closure unless demographics changed hurriedly. In 1997 our District Superintendent was informed to meet with us concerning closure. On June 30th, 1997, the church was deconsecrated and those remaining few members were asked to seek transfer to other nearby congregations

In 1998, for the sum of \$1.00, title to the church and the interior accoutrements were sold to the Worth County Historical Society.

Future plans are to leave the church intact and convert any usable space into a community-church museum.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 7

First Methodist Episcopal Church
Worth County, Iowa

Bibliography

Trustees minutes, secretary records, check stub records and billings located in the files of the First Methodist Episcopal Church.

Verbal Description Boundary

All of lots seven and eight (7 & 8) in block two (2) situated in Mrs. Finch's addition to the village of Kensett, Worth County, Iowa

Verbal boundary justification

The nominated property (originally the First Methodist Episcopal Church) contains the entire parcel historically associated with this nomination.