

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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JUN 26 2015

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See the National Park Service website for more information. 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 FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH

other names/site number First United Methodist Church in Okeechobee FMSF#OB 69

2. Location

street & number 200 Northwest 2<sup>nd</sup> Street N/A  not for publication

city or town Okeechobee N/A  vicinity

state Florida code FL county Okeechobee code 093 zip code 34972

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.)

Robert F. Boudreau SHPO 6/12/15  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation  
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 certifying 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
  - See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Ethan Beall 8-10-15  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**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)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	total

**Name of related multiple property listings**

(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**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: Church  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: Church  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> & Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Late Gothic Revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK  
walls BRICK  
roof ASPHALT  
other STAINED GLASS  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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.

**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

**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 36) 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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1925

**Significant Dates**

1925

**Significant Person**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Zander, Frank W./Builder

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of Repository

# \_\_\_\_\_

First Methodist Episcopal Church, South  
Name of Property

Okeechobee Co., FL  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.066 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	5	1	6	7	0	1	3	0	1	3	5	7	8
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
4															

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 Dowling R. Watford/Robert O. Jones, Historic Preservationist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date June 2015

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone 850-245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32399-0250

### 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 First United Methodist Church attn: Dowling Watford

street & number 200 Northwest 2<sup>nd</sup> Street telephone 863-763-4021

city or town Okeechobee state Florida zip code 34972

**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 amend 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.



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CONTINUATION SHEET**

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SOUTH, OKEECHOBEE, OKEECHOBEE  
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**SUMMARY**

The First Methodist Episcopal Church, South, of Okeechobee, currently known as the First United Methodist Church, is located northwest of the intersection of Southwest Second Avenue and Northeast Second Street. The church and its office share the same address at 200 Northwest Second Street on the north side of the block. The south and east facades of the church feature numerous decorative window openings, with the dominant south elevation containing a large arched window that includes elaborate geometric tracery. Positioned at the corner is a three-story engaged brick belfry and entry tower. The tower is castellated at the top, and all windows and doors are outlined with cast-stone lintels and drip-molds. The south elevation has a gable end with parapet capped with cast-stone, and the east elevation has a gable protruding from the roof slope which includes a circular window within the peak and three arched windows below. This gable also has a parapet capped with cast-stone. A gable extension is at the west elevation. The interior of the church is designed in the Akron Plan with an assembly space within the west extension. A non-contributing one-story assembly hall, added in 1980, fronts Southwest Second Street and abuts the historic church on the north elevation.

**SETTING**

The First Methodist Episcopal Church, South is in historic downtown Okeechobee, one block west and one block north of the major thoroughfares of 1<sup>st</sup> Street/State Road 70 (east/west), known as Park Street, and State Road 441/15 (north/south), known as Parrott Avenue (Photo #1). The county courthouse and government offices are on the block directly west of the church. The west half of the church block is utilized for parking, and the new church office occupies the northeast quarter of the block. The city streets are laid out in an orthogonal grid with sidewalks. Overall the geography is flat and a few mature trees are present in downtown. A park lines the south side of Park Street in the center of the city. To the east of downtown, Taylor Creek runs from north to south and connects to Lake Okeechobee.

Okeechobee County and the City of Okeechobee, which serves as the county seat and the largest city, are both located on the north side of Lake Okeechobee. The lake takes its

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name from the Seminole word for “Big Water.” Vast prairies extend north, and the Florida Turnpike traverses the northeast tip of the county. The main north/south highway is U.S. Highway 441 that runs through the center of the city.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**Exterior**

The brick Gothic Revival Style church, constructed in 1925, has a complex cross gabled asphalt roof and rises two-stories in height to the roof ridge. Windows and doors are topped by arched concrete drip molds. The south and east elevations both front onto main thoroughfares.

The southeast corner features a three-story engaged entry and belfry square tower with a castellated parapet (Photo #2). The corner tower has double wooden doors that are accessed by a concrete handicap ramp on the south side, and by stairs on the east. Half-way up the tower is a single 1/1 sash window and at the top are two louvered vents for the belfry and a belt-course at the vent height, on the east and south elevations. A single arched window and arched louvered vent pierces the west wall of the tower where it engages with the southern gable end. A flat cornice is positioned just below the crenulated top of the belfry tower. Cast-stone arched drip molds are located at the top of every window and door opening.

On the south façade and centered in the gable end is a large arched window with reticulated tracery and stained glass (Photo #3). The pointed roof line has a parapet capped with molded sheet metal. Visible to the west is the broad-side of an extension with two arched windows. The windows are composed of a pair of lancet stained glass windows with a “kite” stained glass panel between them above.

The east façade features the square tower at the southeast corner, the broad side of the main building block with a gabled roof extension, six windows and a door, and the gable end of a 1980 fellowship hall to the north (Photo #4). The east side of the entry and belfry tower is configured the same as the south side, except for the additional porch accessed via

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three concrete steps. Two arched louvered vents are in the north wall of the tower where it engages with the broad side of the roof. The gable roof extension allows a large circular window to be inserted in the gable. Three windows with pairs of lancet stained glass panels are centered in the gable extension, flanked by stepped buttresses capped with flat concrete. Between the corner tower and a buttress is one window with a pair of lancet stained glass panels. Another single window with a pair of lancets is to the north of the second buttress. To the north of this window is a buttress and a single wooden door with three concrete steps and a small window at the northeast corner of the church.

On the north elevation the two-story church chancel extension and portions of the elevation are visible above a one-story building (Photo #5). A gable-front 1980 assembly hall abuts the historic church building on the north side. The hall has two single doors on a broad concrete porch fronting Southwest Second Street, and giving access to the hall and kitchen.

The west elevation has a gable extension with three windows of paired lancet form openings filled with stained glass (Photo #6). The pointed gable roof has a parapet with a molded sheet metal cap. A portion of the main building block which contains two windows with the paired lancet stained glass is visible to the south and also visible is a small portion of the corner tower. The 1980 building that abuts the historic church building can be viewed from this elevation (Photo #7).

**Interior**

From the double main entry doors one enters the narthex within the tower from the south and the east, which opens into the sanctuary through double-doors to the north and west. The interior has a nave with a chancel centered in the north wall (Photo #8), five windows in the east wall (Photo #9), and the one large window in the south wall. The chancel extends to the north with an arched opening. The chancel has choir seating and organ pipes in its north wall. Single doors are in its east and west walls. A dais with two steps extends into the nave and has pulpit on it. An altar/communion table is centered in front of the dais. A short railing with square balusters and kneeling cushions separates the congregation from the dais. On either side of the arched opening to the chancel are single doors and louvered vents that connect to service rooms. The service room to the west

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(Photo #10) is used for storage and enters a small room to the north that controls sound systems, and accesses a small room behind the organ pipes. The one on the east is used for storage.

The rectangular nave has two rows of pews, a center aisle and two side aisles. The pews are set on an angle. The Akron Plan is evident from the westerly extension (Photo #11) that contains rows of pews. Sunday school was held there during the historic period. Three windows are in the west wall of the extension, and two windows are in the south wall. In the extension's north wall is a single arched wooden door that leads to a hallway and access to the new assembly hall. This door historically provided access from the early wooden assembly hall.

**ALTERATIONS**

The pipe organ was installed in the late 1930s. The air-conditioning system was installed in the 1950s. By the 1980s, the pews were replaced with new ones and stained glass was placed in the church windows that previously contained clear glass. A wood assembly hall immediately to the north that served the church in its historic period was replaced with a brick building in 1980. This hall abuts the historic church building but is independent of it.

**NON-CONTRIBUTING FELLOWSHIP HALL**

In 1980, the brick assembly hall (Photo #5) replaced the prior wooden assembly hall that existed during the historic period. The hall is a structurally independent building that abuts the church on its north elevation and it does not compromise the historic fabric of the building nor diminish its integrity. The 1980 hall is differs visually from the historic church in its use of lighter color brick and lower one-story profile. Like the early wooden hall, the 1980 building hugs the west side of the chancel storage room and north wall of the western extension (Figure #3). Access between the two was through the arched wooden door in the Akron plan Sunday school area. That arched door remains as an access point between the two buildings.



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**SUMMARY**

The First Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Okeechobee, Okeechobee County, Florida, is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for its local significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The 1925 church is an excellent example of a transition period in Methodist and Protestant church design, moving away from the auditorium and Akron Plan combination, yet retaining the popular look of these combination churches from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This Late Gothic Revival design with its prominent corner tower with adjacent gabled elevations follows the popular form that customarily housed the auditorium and Akron Plan interior layouts. The First Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Okeechobee, retained the popular exterior look including a faux east gable, eliminating the interior auditorium plan, and adding Romanesque arches to otherwise Gothic styled windows.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

Okeechobee County was established in 1917, being sectioned out of St. Lucie County. Advocacy for the change came from the City of Okeechobee, due to the distance to the county seat in Fort Pierce. Okeechobee County and the City of Okeechobee are located on the north side of Lake Okeechobee, which is the Seminole word for "Big Water." The City of Okeechobee is the county seat and largest city in the county.

The area immediately north of Lake Okeechobee attracted early settlers in the last couple decades of the 1800s, who grazed cattle, raised citrus, hunted and trapped, and fished the lake. Catching catfish in the lake was the first big commercial venture in the area. Using seine net, teams harvested hundreds of pounds a day. Early fish camps shipped their catch down the Caloosahatchee River to Ft. Myers, and when the Hillsboro Canal opened in 1912, shipping was faster to Ft. Lauderdale.<sup>1</sup> In 1898, Dr. George Hubbard arrived from Connecticut and began the first school instruction, only to be succeeded the next year by Mrs. Mary Steffie. Henry Hancock gathered the seven voters needed to establish a voting district in 1902, and that year the "Tantie" post office was established, named for Ms.

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<sup>1</sup> Lawrence E. Wills, "Cracker History of Okeechobee," St. Petersburg, Florida: Great Outdoors Association, 1984, p.20-24.

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Tantie Huckaby, the school teacher that succeeded Steffie. The first post master was Mattie R. Walker who served a little over a month until Peter Raulerson took the post. Raulerson carried the mail once a week between Tantie and Fort Drum, a smaller settlement to the north. In 1905 Lewis Raulerson opened the first store, and in 1906, became the post master of the post office in his store, rather than the Raulerson family home. William M. Ehrhart started a lumber mill in 1908, and it is likely his milled lumber was used to build the new and larger school in 1909. Dr. Hubbard returned to teaching, and provided medical services to the settlement.<sup>2</sup>

This slow growth of the lakeside settlement dramatically changed in 1911, when Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railroad announced that they intended to bring a rail line into the town. The company envisioned a large city to serve as a train service depot half way between Jacksonville and Key West. The train service would also ship fish, lumber, turpentine, cattle, and other agricultural products. The company's Model Land Company subsidiaries would sell city lots and farm land, and survey and plat the expanding town. The name Tantie was changed to Okeechobee, and in 1912 the town was surveyed and in January 1914 the plat was filed. The first train arrived in Okeechobee January 4, 1915, and immediately the city began to grow. Land sold quickly as brick stores and a bank were built. Okeechobee City was incorporated on June 4<sup>th</sup>, and the first city council meeting was held on July 13<sup>th</sup>. The Okeechobee Call started as the city's first newspaper in July of that same year.<sup>3</sup>

Early churches in Okeechobee organized in tandem with the arrival of the railroads. The Church of God organized in 1912. By 1915 Methodists and Baptists both started meeting in March and May respectively, and both denominations built their first churches the next year. An Episcopal congregation began in 1916, and initially assembled in the Scharfschwerdt Motion Picture Theater.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Kyle S. VanLandingham and Alma Hetherington, Fort Pierce, Florida, self published, 1978, p.35-45.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p.45,46,54-61.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.62.

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**ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT**

The Congregational Society in New York City, built the Broadway Tabernacle in 1836 as the first church in the United States with an “auditorium” style interior layout. In an effort to seat as many people as close as possible to the minister and his sermon, a curved dais (raised platform) was built with the pulpit in the center. Pews and balconies at the rear were curved as well. Aisles between the pews radiated from the pulpit. This permitted the most people to be seated in front of, and beside the minister. As the style developed, the floors were sloped from the rear to the pulpit to render better acoustics and view of the pulpit for the congregation.<sup>5</sup>

An interior spatial plan known as the “Akron Plan” was first used in 1870 at the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Akron, Ohio, hence its name. Reflecting a national movement toward child education, the Methodist denomination was at the forefront of the Sunday school movement. The Akron Plan had the Sunday school rooms positioned adjacent to the main sanctuary that were often in the auditorium form. Sliding or folding doors would open and close between the two spaces. This was so the children and adults could jointly participate in the opening and closing of the worship service. During the service the children would receive instruction adjusted to their age group.<sup>6</sup> By 1875, the Akron Plan was well known across the nation and by the 1890s had become a standard way for medium to large Protestant congregations to accommodate Sunday school programs.<sup>7</sup>

The Methodist Episcopal denomination following the Civil War experienced a period of nationwide expansion. To aid all their member churches, especially the smaller ones, the denomination formed a Board of Church Extension in 1865 to develop serviceable and attractive buildings.<sup>8</sup> The Board emphasized that prior to designing any building, there should be a program to define the functions and needs that building would serve. The

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Jaeger, “The Auditorium and Akron Plans,” Cornell University, Master’s Thesis, May, 1984, p.53-54.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.141-147.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.160

<sup>8</sup> Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, *American Methodist Worship*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, p.252.

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Board also advocated attractive churches to reflect well on the denomination.<sup>9</sup> To assist small congregations build affordable and attractive churches, the Board hired Benjamin D. Price (1845-1922), an architect who sold church designs from catalogs.<sup>10</sup> His designs usually featured a corner tower that served as an entry and belfry (Figure #1). A plan that gained wide popularity was a corner entry tower flanked by two prominent gable elevations which became a common church image by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On a modest budget small congregations could have a distinctive church building, and its interior easily could be subdivided into either an auditorium space with the pulpit and altar in a corner, or a traditional axial plan within a rectangular space, plus a side room for a Sunday school. Such small Methodist Episcopal churches were built in Florida, illustrated by an example in Archer (Figure #2). Florida's first and oldest Methodist congregation formed in 1824 in Tallahassee, then the territorial capital, and by 1893 they constructed a Gothic Revival church with an entry tower flanked with prominent gables (Figure #3).

The 19<sup>th</sup> century trend to incorporate Sunday schools into the church footprint began a wider trend to expand the number of community services churches offered. Architect George W. Kramer, who was nationally known as an advocate of the Akron Plan, was a promoter of what he called the "combination" church plan, which created spaces to serve various community needs.<sup>11</sup> Church meetings and suppers, charity services, adult education, Boy and Girl Scouts, all required different facilities for different functions. Into the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Methodist Board of Church Extensions, and the Bureau of Architecture (formed in 1917) assisted churches that wished to expand their facilities to provide community services. In 1922, the Methodist advisory boards issued a 32 page booklet titled "Building the Seven-Day-A-Week Church," which advocated that every space in a church be available for multiple uses except the sanctuary. Since the Akron Plan Sunday school had a dedicated space for a single function, the plan was termed "obsolete."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Elmo C. Lowe, "The Centenary and Church Architecture," *The Church Advocate*, Vol. 45, #32, New York: The Methodist Book Concern, August 5, 1920, p.1053.

<sup>10</sup> "Benjamin Price and the Board of Church Extension," *The New Jersey Churchscape*, #75, March 2009. [www.njchurchscape.com](http://www.njchurchscape.com)

<sup>11</sup> George W. Kramer, *The What, How and Why of Church Building*, New York: 1897, xii.

<sup>12</sup> Bureau of Architecture of the Methodist Episcopal Church, "Building the Seven-Day-A-Week Church," Philadelphia: Departments of City Work and Church Extension of the Board of Home Missions and Church Extensions, 1928, p6.

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By the turn of the century, “both the auditorium preaching place and Akron Plan Sunday school were to be entirely supplanted in the course of thirty years. Both plans, which had been enthusiastically promoted and ubiquitously employed by the non-ritual Protestant churches in 1900, were no longer being built by 1930.”<sup>13</sup>

Two design styles in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century heavily influenced the looks of Protestant churches. First was the solidity and emotion seen in H.H. Richardson’s 1873-1877 Romanesque Revival Trinity Episcopal Church in Boston, which marked a new vision of an enduring sacred space. The architectural forms found in Trinity Church and Richardson’s Allegheny Courthouse in Pittsburgh, were widely mimicked across late-nineteenth century America.<sup>14</sup> The Romanesque-Revival appealed to the public’s taste, but more persuasive was the second influence, a resurgent interest in Gothic design now termed the Late Gothic Revival. Of all architectural styles, the “Gothic order is considered the most truly expressive of Christianity,” reflected the opinion of the director of the Methodist Bureau of Architecture, Elbert M. Conover.<sup>15</sup> The Gothic rectangular form and axial sanctuary plan, with an altar placed at a narrow end of the center aisle, had dominated Christian church design for hundreds of years, and had continually been used by the Episcopal and Catholic churches, being the more consistently liturgical denominations. By the time the guidelines of the “Building the Seven-Day-A-Week Church” was published, the auditorium sanctuary was virtually absent from architect’s designs, and the Akron Plan in the 1920s was disappearing as well.<sup>16</sup>

Along with a renewal of the Late Gothic Revival at the start of the 20th century was a growing interest in the liturgy, or ritual of worship. This reflected the involvement of the congregation and not solely a focus on the pastor and his pulpit. A focus on the altar, a centrally placed chancel, a center aisle and a processional of participants in the worship, all tended to an axial arrangement of the sanctuary and a move away from the auditorium plan. New construction was curtailed during the Great Depression and World War II, in

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<sup>13</sup> Jaeger, p.182.

<sup>14</sup> James F. O’Gorman, “Living Architecture: A Biography of H.H. Richardson,” New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997, p.111.

<sup>15</sup> Bureau of Architecture of the Methodist Episcopal Church, “Building the Seven-Day-A-Week Church,” p.26.

<sup>16</sup> Jaeger, p.206.

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

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SOUTH, OKEECHOBEE, OKEECHOBEE  
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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the 1930s and 1940s. As construction renewed by the 1950s after the war, new trends in church design were evident.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The 1925 First Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Okeechobee, Florida, is an excellent example of a Methodist church that embodies many of the shifting church design trends in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1925 the congregation replaced their wood frame church to invest in a fashionable brick downtown landmark, while church support operations and community assemblies continued in a wood frame building located immediately to the north and abutting the northwest portion of the brick church, as evident in a 1933 Sanborn Map.<sup>17</sup> Circulation between the two buildings was through an arched door in the Sunday school's north wall. That arched door continues to provide that access between the building for worship and the recent 1980 brick ancillary building that replaced the former wood building.

The exterior design elements of a corner entry tower with flanking gabled elevations was a ubiquitous church image in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century for both Methodist and Protestant denominations. This form was associated with an interior that included an auditorium plan and an adjacent room for Sunday school. The Okeechobee church expresses these design trends with a tower flanked by prominent gables, including an ocular window in a gable attached to the east elevation. This attachment, however, was only for exterior ornament as no gable extension or ocular window is seen on the interior. On the exterior, the castellated tower, steep gables, and elaborate tracery in the major windows reflect Gothic design, and yet the arched windows and doors acknowledge the popularity of the Romanesque Revival as introduced by Henry H. Richardson in the 1880s and 1890s.

The interior of the church does not have an auditorium plan set within a square, but rather a rectangular sanctuary with a recessed chancel centered in the north wall and a central aisle between two sections of pews. The Akron Plan was still incorporated with the large room in the western extension, which was used for Sunday school during the historic period and now serves as expanded seating during the worship service.

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<sup>17</sup> Sanborn Maps, Florida/Okeechobee/1933.



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SOUTH, OKEECHOBEE, OKEECHOBEE  
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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National Park Service**

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SOUTH, OKEECHOBEE, OKEECHOBEE  
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

City of Okeechobee, Lots 1-12, Block 139  
Parcel #3-15-37-35-0010-01390-0010

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The National Register boundary of the First Methodist Episcopal Church, South, also known as the First United Methodist Church, encompasses the 1925 church, the 1980 non-historic assembly building to the north that abuts the church and shares a party wall, the lawn to the west, and space between the church and the sidewalk right-of-ways. The property within the National Register boundary has been historically associated with the First Methodist Episcopal Church, South, also known as the First United Methodist Church.

The setting of the remainder of the church property has been drastically altered by the non-historic parking lot occupying the west half of the block, and the non-historic building fronting onto Northwest 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

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SOUTH, OKEECHOBEE, OKEECHOBEE  
COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**PHOTOGRAPHIC LIST**

1. First Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 200 Northwest 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Okeechobee
2. Okeechobee County, Florida
3. Watford, Dowling
4. May, 2015
5. Main elevations, looking northwest
6. Photo #1 of 11

Items 1 – 4 are the same for the rest of the photographs.

5. South façade, looking north
6. Photo #2 of 11

5. Detail of south window, looking north
6. Photo #3 of 11

5. East façade, looking west
6. Photo #4 of 11

5. East façade showing 1980 assembly building, looking west
6. Photo #5 of 11

5. West elevation, looking east
6. Photo #6 of 11

5. West elevation showing connection to 1980 assembly building, looking east
6. Photo #7 of 11

5. Chancel, looking north
6. Photo #8 of 11

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	_____		_____	

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- 5. East half of nave, looking northeast
  - 6. Photo #9 of 11
  
  - 5. Storage room, west of chancel, looking north
  - 6. Photo #10 of 11
  
  - 5. West of nave and Akron plan western extension, looking northwest
  - 6. Photo #11 of 11

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,  
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Figure #1 - Design from Price's catalog of church designs



Figure #2 – Church in Archer, 1880s

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COUNTY, FLORIDA**



**Figure #3** Tallahassee Methodist Church 1892

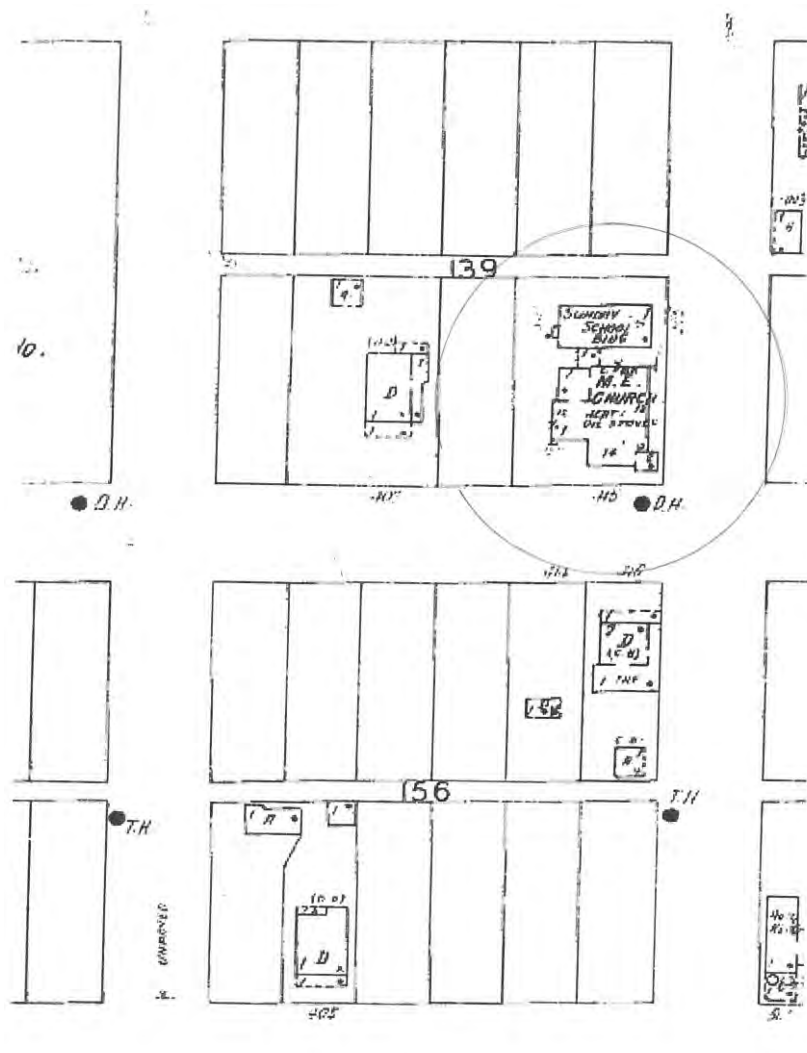


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National Park Service

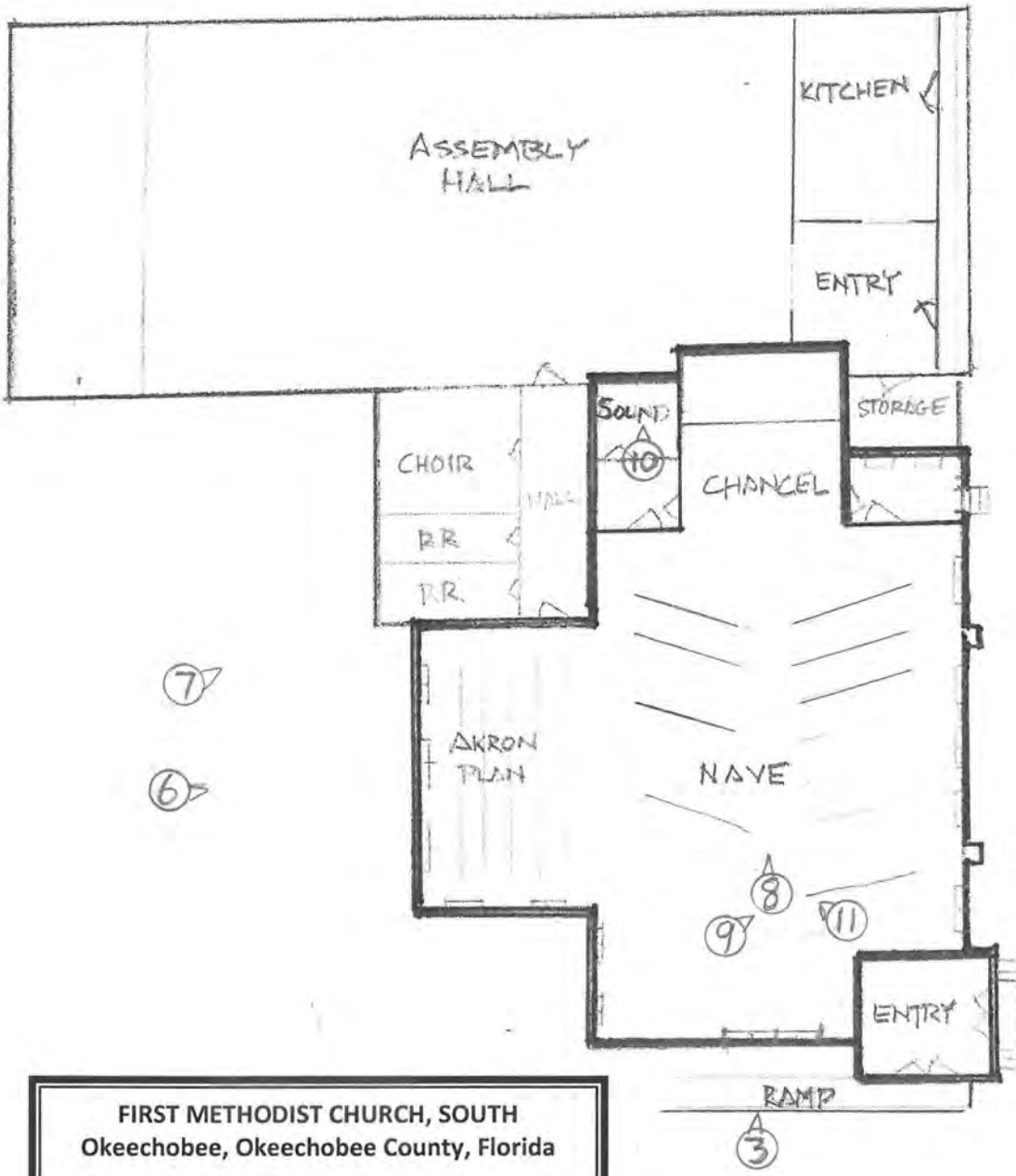
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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SOUTH, OKEECHOBEE, OKEECHOBEE  
COUNTY, FLORIDA**



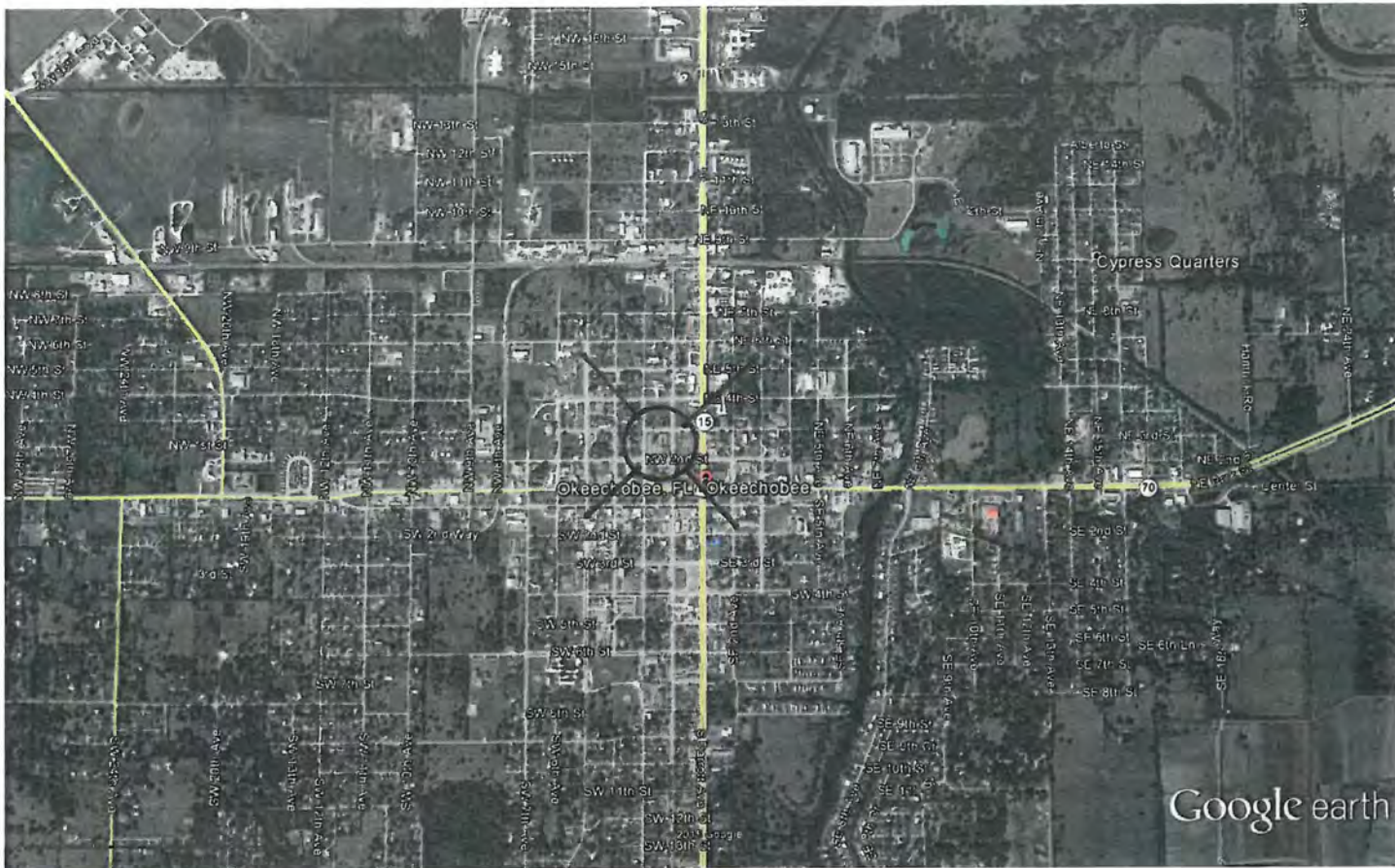
**Figure #4** – 1933 Sanborn Insurance map for the town of Okeechobee, showing the wooden assembly building, identified as the Sunday school building, just north and connected via a hyphen to the 1925 brick church.



**FIRST METHODIST CHURCH, SOUTH**  
**Okeechobee, Okeechobee County, Florida**

**FLOOR PLAN & PHOTO DIAGRAM**

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 ④  
 ⑤  
 ⑥  
 ⑦

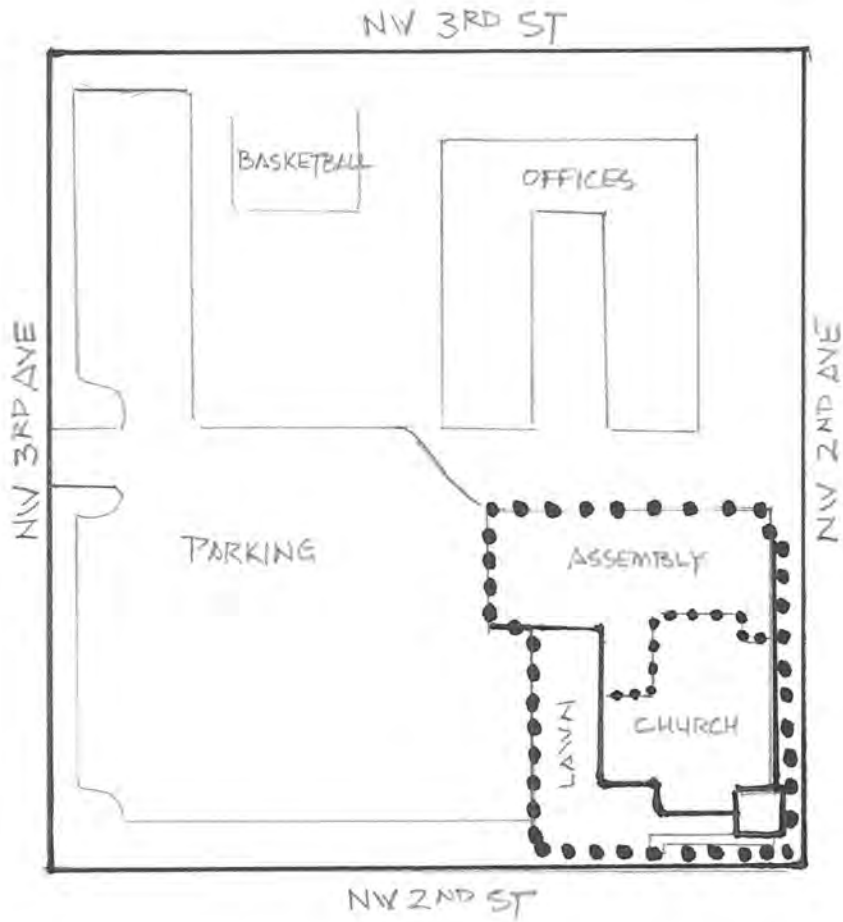


Google earth



**FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH**  
**Okeechobee, Okeechobee County, Florida**

**LOCATOR MAP**  
**UTM**  
**Zone 17 Easting 516701 Northing 3013578**



**FIRST METHODIST CHURCH, SOUTH**  
**Okeechobee, Okeechobee County, Florida**  
  
**SITE DIAGRAM**  
  
**NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY**  
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05/23/2015 11:54



05/23/2015 11:55





05/23/2015 11:55





05/23/2015 11:54







Handicap Sign  
NO PARKING  
EXCEPT FOR  
EMERGENCY VEHICLES  
OR VEHICLES OF  
THE STATE OF TEXAS

05/23/2015 11:56





05/23/2015 11:57



05/23/2015 12:01





05/23/2015 12:01

02/14/2015 10:44







05/23/2015 12:01

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY First Methodist Episcopal Church, South  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: FLORIDA, Okeechobee

DATE RECEIVED: 6/26/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/21/15  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/05/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/11/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000509

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 8-10-15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

**RICK SCOTT**  
Governor

**KEN DETZNER**  
Secretary of State

June 25, 2015

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief,  
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs  
Department of the Interior  
1201 Eye Street, N.W., 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **First Methodist Episcopal Church, South (FMSF #80B069), in Okeechobee County**, to the National Register of Historic Places. The related materials (digital images, maps, and site plan) are included.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (850) 245-6333 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Desiree Estabrook  
Historic Preservation Supervisor, Survey & Registration  
Bureau of Historic Preservation



Division of Historical Resources  
R.A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399  
850.245.6300 • 850.245.6436 (Fax) [flheritage.com](http://flheritage.com)  
*Promoting Florida's History and Culture* [VivaFlorida.org](http://VivaFlorida.org)







# City of Okeechobee

15000509



Brian Whitehall

Office of the City Administrator

June 30, 2015

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Cultural Resources  
National Register of Historic Places  
Mail Stop 2280  
1849 C. St. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

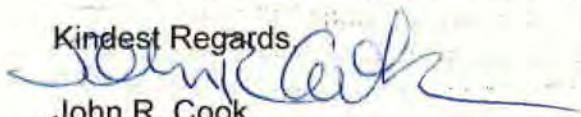
To whom it may concern:

On behalf of the City of Okeechobee, Florida, the City would formally and enthusiastically support the pending recommendation from the Florida National Register Review Board to nominate the local Methodist Church, 200 N.W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, for listing with the National Register of Historic Places.

Our church was erected in 1924, and has been in continuous use since. Interestingly, the cornerstone of the church names it as a Methodist Episcopal Church South. As you well know, the Methodist church split in 1844 between North and South as a result of disagreements over slavery, and the Methodist Episcopal Church South continued as an entity until 1939, when it merged with the Methodist Church, known today as the First United Methodist Church. After the war, the large contingent of African American members created their own entity, the AME church which also continues to this day. The very first MEC South was built in Ozark, Arkansas, just 15 years prior, in 1909 and placed on the National Register in 1992.

The architecture of the church reflects a common theme from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which is found in many other early structures within the City. As the City this year celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> year of existence from 1915, the Methodist Church was constructed very early after the formation of the town. It has served, and spiritually comforted, our families continuously for nearly 100 years and would be well deserving of the recognition in the National Registry.

Kindest Regards

  
John R. Cook  
City Administrator

JRC/rb