

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

For NPS use only

received **MAY 15 1985**

date entered **JUN 19**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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

**1. Name**

historic First Congregational Church

and/or common First Congregational United Church of Christ

**2. Location**

street & number 80 Market \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Platteville \_\_\_ vicinity of

state Wisconsin code 55 county Grant code 043

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name First Congregational United Church of Christ

street & number 80 Market

city, town Platteville \_\_\_ vicinity of state Wisconsin 53818

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Grant County Courthouse

street & number 126 West Maple Street

city, town Lancaster state Wisconsin 53813

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
title Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1983 \_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street

city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

## 7. Description

|  |                                       |   |   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Condition</b>                         |                                       | <b>Check one</b>                            | <b>Check one</b>                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent       | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input checked="" 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

The present First Congregational United Church of Christ church, facing south, includes the original brick structure built in 1869, partially from brick and other materials of the previous church, with a square tower and octagonal steeple adjoining at the south-east corner. Also included is an 1895<sup>1</sup> brick veneered extension at the rear which was made in material, scale, and form sympathetic to the church. The original one story church building has a sloping terneplate roof and the extension a gable type roof.

The principal entrance, centered in the front, is layered round arched double door entrance portal (entrance also had been in the base of the tower, now filled in). The side walls each contain four windows set in from the exterior surface. A border of brick, perpendicular to the opening and less depressed, surround the entire perimeter of each window except the base. A large cut stone sill is at the base of each window, extending beyond the sides. The coupled round arched windows, round arched louvered openings in the third story of the tower, and stained glass windows accent this vernacular interpretation of prevalent mid-19th century Revival styles with a Romanesque influence.

The extension is of the same brick as the principal structure with stained glass, large arched windows at each end and small round stained glass windows above. The back has large windows in the middle and small windows on each side on both first and second stories. Entries with wood doors are at or near both ends. The roof is of gable type with asbestos shingles.

The interior of the church has received several renovations, some substantial, since its 1869 construction.<sup>2</sup> The 1895 extension at the rear of the church provided parlors on the ground level and two rooms on the second story, all used as Sunday school space. In 1912 the nave platform was remodeled. A basement was dug under the entire structure in 1922 which provided kitchen, dining room, cloak room, heating plant, and additional Sunday school space-total cost of \$4,155. The belfry was repaired in 1923. In 1928 a new organ (pipe) was installed at a cost of \$5,200. The entire interior was redecorated in 1938 for the 1939 100th anniversary of the founding of the congregation. In 1943 a basement floor of concrete with asphalt tile was laid. Also, the basement entrance was changed and front entrance centered on front. Stained glass windows were repaired in 1959. The steeple was re-roofed in 1965; new cushioned pews were added in 1967; and extensive exterior work (brick cleaned, wood trim cleaned and painted) was completed in 1968. In 1983-84 the stained glass windows were re-done completely including lexon covering protection. The ceiling is the original gambrel-form, and the wall surfaces are currently painted plaster.

<sup>1</sup>"Church History of the First Congregational United Church of Christ," (an on-going account, maintained by various authors through the years 1839-present), available in the Wisconsin Room of Karrmann Library on the University of Wisconsin-Platteville campus.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

(continued)

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> theater         |
| <input 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 1869<sup>1</sup>

Builder/Architect George Nettleton<sup>2</sup>

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The First Congregational United Church of Christ is architecturally significant, distinguished by the use of the Romanesque round arch for windows and doors, and the paired window openings as well as the characteristic articulation of the exterior surfaces. Although mainly influenced by the Romanesque style, the tall tower and steeple, more in keeping with the Gothic Revival style, gives the church an eclectic appearance. The windows are described as "magnificent, attractive, and beautiful" with special emphasis on the Pastors' window and Plackhorst's "Christ rescuing Peter" window.<sup>3</sup>

Designed by George Nettleton of Janesville, Wisconsin and costing \$11,000, this historic church structure is one of the two most elaborate of the surviving 19th century churches in Platteville (other is Holy Trinity Episcopal Church at 230 Market), maintained for the most part as it was built, both exterior and interior. While the Gothic Revival was favored by Episcopalian and Catholic parishes, the Romanesque style was generally preferred by Congregationalists and other low-church groups. This building along with the extensions at the rear (1895<sup>4</sup>) is important to the city because it is the only remaining church without the pointed windows of the Gothic style and it holds an important visual site, fronting on the city park one block from Main Street.

In 1903 the present windows were installed, furnished by members and friends of the church as memorials to loved ones and each one inscribed. The Pastors' window contains the names and date of service of all the pastors of the church up to 1903. In the center of the window is a life size production of Hoffman's adult head of Christ under which are the words "My Lord and My God". Outstanding, is the large window over the main entrance, the life size "Christ rescuing Peter" inscribed to Rev. A.P. Johnson. The dedicatory tablet reads: "In loving Tribute to Rev. Alfred Perry Johnson, pastor from 1872-1886", under whom the church had such great prosperity.

With 9 members the Congregational Church was first organized as a Presbyterian congregation August 17, 1839, which was during the early years of lead mining in this area and resulted in rapid development of what is now the southwestern part of Wisconsin.<sup>5</sup> Sunday School and choir were started with the inception of the church. The Methodist Episcopal Church opened its doors to the infant church and kept them open until the congregation had a home of their own. Their first church was built at the corner of Bonson and Furnace Streets in 1846. In 1849 the congregation voted and changed church government from Presbyterian to Congregational. The first church was razed and this one erected in 1869.

(continued)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

(continued)

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Platteville

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

145 - PC Original Plat  
Lots 1 & 2 Block 8  
E 25' of adj clsd N. Court St. City of Platteville.

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

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Melvin G. Pfefferkorn, member

organization First Congregational United Church of Christ date January 15, 1985

street & number 80 Market telephone (608) 348-6493

city or town Platteville state Wisconsin 53818

# 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 *Jeff Dean*

title DIRECTOR OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION date APRIL 24, 1985

For NPS use only

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

*J. Alloues Bryan* Entered in the National Register date 6-19-85  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
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received

date entered

Continuation sheet Platteville, Grant County  
First Congregational Church Item number 8

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From the beginning the church was involved with education, in addition to social and community activities. In 1841 Rev. Alvin M. Dixon, one of the original members, started an academy and also served as principal. School was on the second floor and church services held on the first floor. The academy has evolved to what today is the University of Wisconsin at Platteville. Adrian Van Vliet joined the church in 1849 and became a minister. He founded the German Presbyterian Theological School of Dubuque, now the University of Dubuque. In 1877 Rev. Alfred Perry Johnson instigated a remarkable and successful moral upheaval (anti-saloon) that Platteville ever saw. The Congregational Ladies Literary Society started in 1881. In 1900 it became the Monday Evening Club as it is at the present. Rev. William H. Short became minister in 1900, and in two years he left to work under President Taft for international peace, attending international conferences and working for limitation of armaments. He authored many books.

During the twentieth century many educators and community leaders have been attracted to the church, making it a steady and influential force within the growing community. The features are present today along with the fact that it has had the finest of church choirs for many years.

<sup>1</sup>Western Historical Company (compiled from accounts of local residents), History of Grant County, Wisconsin (Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1881), pp. 729-730.

Castello N. Holford, History of Grant County, Wisconsin (Lancaster, WI: The Teller Print, 1900), pp. 502-503.

Joan Rausch, Rebecca Neville, Sharon Devitt, Charles Sulik, "An Intensive Architectural and Historical Survey of Mining Communities of Portions of LaFayette and Grant Counties, Wisconsin," Planning Report No. 54, South-western Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, 29 July 1983, p. 204.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

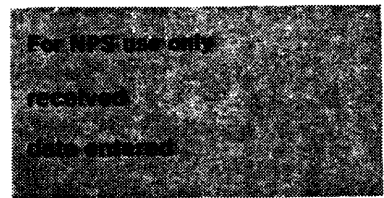
<sup>3</sup>"The Congregational Church Beautiful", Platteville Journal, 26 August 1903, P. 1.

<sup>4</sup>"Church History of the First Congregational United Church of Christ," (an on-going account, maintained by various authors through the years 1839-present), available in the Wisconsin Room of Karrmann Library on the University of Wisconsin-Platteville campus.

<sup>5</sup>Western Historical Co., pp. 729-730.  
Holford, pp. 502-503.

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Platteville, Grant County

Continuation sheet First Cingregational Church Item number 8

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<sup>6</sup> Among the communities other religious edifices are: the one-story, brick Gothic Revival Free Methodist Church; the well-preserved, 1864 Gothic, Trinity Episcopal Church; the 1928, Neo-gothic First English Lutheran Congregation; and the wood-frame St Paul's Lutheran structure of 1876. The First Congregational Church on Market St. is the only extant, historic (19th century) church in the community constructed in a style other than Gothic Revival, and represents a special Platteville resource.

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Platteville, Grant County  
Continuation sheet First Congregational Church Item number 9

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1. Western Historical Company, History of Grant County, Wisconsin, Chicago, Western Historical Company, 1881.
2. Holford, History of Grant County, Wisconsin, Lancaster, Wisconsin, The Teller Print, 1900.
3. Platteville Journal, The Congregational Church Beautiful, Platteville, Wisconsin, Platteville Journal, 1903.
4. Church History of the First Congregational United Church of Christ, Platteville, Wisconsin, 1839 - Present.

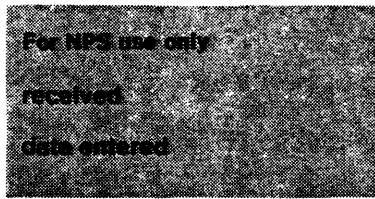
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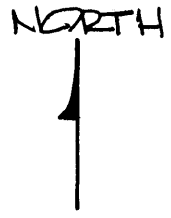
Platteville, Grant County.

Continuation sheet First Congregational Church Item number 7

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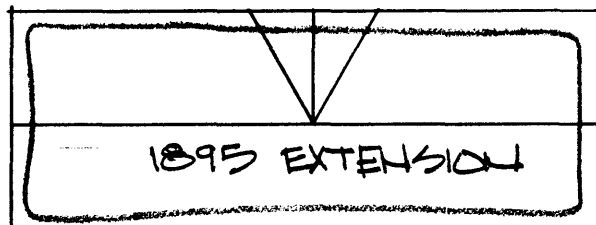
SKETCH MAP  
NTS



FURNACE ST.

N. COURT ST.

N. PROHSON ST.



1895 EXTENSION

ORIGINAL 1869  
BUILDING

PROPERTY LINE

MARKET ST.

CITY PARK