

How does one set about building a church? He doesn't. No one man can be or build a church. He may set stones upon each other and fill the window spaces with stained glass. He may play upon the organ or sing loudly in the sanctuary. But alone he does not truly worship. In solitary he is not a church.

Only as two or three or more join in the worship and together display a style of life appropriate to the faith does the church come into being. *Then* it is that the Spirit moves mightily through the mortal frame lending enlightenment and power which only a forgiven sinner can claim. *Then* it is that he who enters the doors of the building may by the grace of God sally forth to become a refreshing stream in the world.

It is God who builds the church. Men like ourselves may share the rare privilege of erecting a building set apart for the worship of almighty God and the service of men. But it is He to whom we lift songs of praise and in whom we find our completeness. It is He who is the bond, the life, the goal, the reason for it all.

Lest in pride we forget the eternal order of things, let all who enter into this holy place do so with honest fear and amazement that the good Lord can love such as us. Then perchance our worship will be genuine, and the service we propose to render will really bring a blessing.

Robert W. Fribley, D.D.  
First Methodist Church

## **EARLY HISTORY**

Early published histories of Madison County have recorded that the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in Anderson in 1827. The first ministers who visited this county were Methodist circuit riders, and prior to 1827 and for some years thereafter, meetings were held in homes in various parts of the community. In 1839 a tract of land west of Delaware Street and south of Eleventh Street was donated for a church and cemetery, and soon after the Methodist society began the construction of a church which was never completed. However, this building served as a place of worship for several years and tradition has it that the pews were of split logs and the lights were candles brought by the worshipers.

In 1849 preparations were made for the building of a new church and two lots were obtained at the northeast corner of Eleventh and Meridian Streets. The following year a frame building 36 x 50 feet was erected on this site, at a cost of about \$1,200. Worship continued here until 1870.

## **THE CHURCH IN 1871**

About 1869 the congregation purchased a lot at the southeast corner of Eleventh and Meridian Streets, just across the street from the former site and where the Citizens Bank Building now stands. A large and commodious brick edifice, 50 x 80 feet was erected with a tower 140 feet high and a steeple reaching to 170 feet. Worship began here in 1871. There was a lecture room below and an auditorium above which would accommodate a congregation of 500 persons. A contemporary writer reported, "It has a very fine exterior appearance, and on the whole is a model of beauty and neatness, excelling, in the symmetry of its proportions, any church in the city."

## **FIRST METHODIST CHURCH 1900 – 1960**

The fourth home of the Methodist congregation which had its beginning in 1827 was the large stone church that occupied the present site until the tragic fire of 1960. It was built in 1900 at a cost of some \$50,000 by a membership of 700 people. The cornerstone was laid at 10:00 a.m., Monday, January 1, 1900; and the church was dedicated Sunday, February 24, 1901. In 1950, with a membership of 3,275, it became necessary to build an addition to the church to provide more classrooms and educational facilities. This educational building was the only portion of the church which was saved, and it is being integrated into the new building.

## **DECEMBER 23, 1960**

Tragedy struck First Methodist church on the night of December 22, 1960 in the form of a raging fire. Two days before Christmas on the morning of December 23, the morning sunlight cast its eerie rays on a smoldering pile of rubble surrounded by a shell of cold, ice-covered stone.

## **MEETING A CHALLENGE**

Immediately after the disastrous fire, First Methodist families united under the leadership of their pastor, Dr. Robert Fribley, and pledged their support to rebuild the church. On January 2, 1961, just 10 days after the tragedy, the nominating committee met and named 42 members of the congregation to make up the new building committee. Ward K. Stilson accepted the challenge as General Chairman.

No amount of praise is too great for this unselfish body of men and women who worked tirelessly in planning the new church, yet it is recognized that they could have accomplished nothing without the overwhelming support of the rest of the congregation. First Methodist families responded generously with their money, their talents and their time. Their unanimous support in this common goal has created a unity of purpose which will be felt for many years to come.

Names of all who have served in an official capacity appear on the opposite page.

# THE BUILDING COMMITTEE

**GENERAL CHAIRMAN** – Ward K. Stilson

**MINISTER** – Robert W. Fribley, D.D.

## **BUILDING FACILITIES COMMITTEE**

Loren O. Binkley, *Chairman*

Dr. Rollie A. Bennett, *Vice-Chairman*

Mrs. Robert Brinson, *Secretary*

Mrs. Walter R. Bagot

George Bauner

Max E. Beigh

Hugh M. Cherry

Cedric A. Dunkerly

Howard M. Gaar

Mrs. H. Wilber Hardacre

Mrs. Robert W. Heaton

Mrs. Sara R. Huber

Mrs. Neal Kleyla

Walter L. Persing

Mrs. Thomas E. Persing

Verne A. Petry

Allen Reinhardt

Mrs. Myron B. Reynolds

Roy R. Roudebush

Robert L. Scott

James Stefke

O. T. White

Edith L. Whiteford

Eugene Yates

Daniel D. Quickel

Mrs. Daniel D. Quickel

## **RESIDENT BISHOP**

Richard C. Raines

## **DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT**

Thurman B. Morris, D.D.

## **MINISTER OF PASTORAL CARE**

John E. Siner

## **MINISTER OF EDUCATION**

William F. Mathys

## **DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION**

Donald L. Trout

## **DIRECTOR OF MUSIC**

D. William Frame

Earl K. Scott, Jr.

## **CHAIRMAN OFFICIAL BOARD**

Harry E. Hudson, Jr.

## **W.S.C.S.**

Mrs. H. Wilber Hardacre

Mrs. Sara R. Huber

## **LAY LEADER**

O. T. White

## **ARCHITECTS & CONTRACTORS COMMITTEE**

H. Wilber Hardacre, *Chairman*

A. O. Barnes, *Vice-Chairman*

Delbert Spangler, *Secretary*

Walter R. Bagot

Kenneth E. Ballinger

E. M. Davidson

Oscar Hilligoss

H. E. Hudson

Elvin M. Schrope

Robert M. Wagner

Joe A. Williams

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

H. G. Riggs, *Chairman*

Charles H. Dickmann, *Chairman*

William Schofield, *Vice-Chairman*

A. Harold Wood, *Secretary*

John A. Kollegge

Wilbur Roby

## **TRUSTEES**

H. E. Hudson, *President*

A. O. Barnes, *Vice-President*

E. M. Davidson, *Secretary*

Oscar Hilligoss, *Secretary*

Roy R. Roudebush, *Secretary*

H. Wilber Hardacre

H. G. Riggs

Walter L. Pershing

William Schofield

Walter R. Bagot

Robert M. Wagner

Ward K. Stilson

**ARCHITECTS** – Arthur B. Henning – Anderson

Harold E. Wagoner – Philadelphia – Consultant

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR** – W. R. Dunkin & Son, Inc...

Tibbetts Plumbing & Heating Co.

**Associates** – Moorehead Electric Co., Inc.

## **ABOUT THE ARCHITECTS**

After careful deliberation and study, Arthur b. Henning, A.I.A. noted Anderson architect and his associates were selected to design the new church building. Harold Wagoner, A.I.A., Philadelphia, one of the foremost church designers in America, was selected as the consulting architect.

### **Arthur Henning**

Mr. Henning was educated at the University of Illinois, and has been the honored recipient of First and Second medals from the Beaux Arts Institute of Design in New York. He has been the architect for more that 236 projects in this area since 1946. Principal works in this area include the Park Place Church of God in Anderson, Community Hospital, the new Anderson High School gymnasium and Athletic Plant, and many large schools in the vicinity.

### **Harold Wagoner**

Mr. Wagoner was educated at Carnegie Tech and the University of Pennsylvania and also was selected for study at Ecole Americaine de Beaux Arts in Fountainebleau, France. He is a past president of the Church Architecture Guild of America and a staff member of the Methodist Bureau of Architects. He has completed more than 250 ecclesiastical projects since 1948 and is currently involved in about 100 more. Principal works include the First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, Mississippi; First Presbyterian, South Bend; Second Presbyterian, Memphis; Bridgeport Methodist, Bridgeport, West Virginia; First Baptist, Washington, D.C.

# THE SYMBOLISM OF FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

## INSCRIBED PANELS

Three inscribed stone panels to the left side of the 12<sup>th</sup> Street doors and on the wall of the entry porch quote from the Scriptures to illustrate the essentials of our Protestant Christian Faith.

They read from the lower panel up.

1. “A man is not justified by the works of the law but by the faith of Jesus Christ.” Gal. 2:16
2. “Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.” Matthew 18:20
3. “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

## DOOR HANDLES

To enter the church building one must take hold of the shaft of a cross. Each external door handle is surmounted by a brass cross which symbolizes the spirit of self-denial and full devotion necessary for fruitful Christian worship, fellowship, and service not only inside the building but also in the surrounding community and the world. (Luke 9:23, John 13:14) There is no entry here except by grasping the shaft of the cross.

## THE SPIRE

The aluminum spire surmounted by a 10' stainless steel cross stands 171'6" above the intersection of Jackson and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets. It faces the heart of the city as if to remind all that the Church has a responsibility in the daily activity and at all points of decision in the community—that Christ Himself was not beside the road but in the middle of it where men sweat, strain, suffer and decide.

## DESCENDING DOVE

All glass doors of the building have etched upon them the descending dove as originally designed for the baptismal font. This symbol is an historic sign of the descent of the Holy spirit into the believer's life whenever he is spiritually receptive. It recalls the sign at Jesus' baptism (Mark 1:10) and the renewal or regeneration of spiritual life at Pentecost—the 'birthday of the Christian Church.' (Acts 2:4)

## THE FISH

On the floor of the wide, friendly narthex or vestibule is an additional reminder that this is a Christian Church. The Fish, as a symbol of Jesus and the Christian community, refers back to Luke 24:42 where Jesus ate a piece of fish following his resurrection.

For early Christians during times of persecution it was a sign often marked on the door of a house where at night and in secret the Lord's Supper would be observed. It was a common symbol of the day and therefore not understood in its Christian significance by the Roman authorities.

The Greek word for fish IXOYC (ichthys) forms an acrostic: I Jesus, S Christ,) God, Y Son, and C Savior.

## THE TRIANGLE AND TRIQUETRA

The triangle on the floor of the narthex is a commonly used symbol of the Trinity, as is the triquetra inscribed on all glass panels. The three persons of the Trinity, Father, Son, Holy spirit, are as distinct as the sides of the triangle, yet inseparably joined and equal in every respect, one inseparable Godhead.

When a cross is used in the triangle it becomes the symbol of Christ as one of the Persons of the Trinity.

Here we see a Greek cross—with arms of equal length—probably developed by the artistic Greeks as a perfect form of the cross.

## THE CHANCEL CROSS

High on the chancel wall at the east end of the sanctuary the open cross binds into a unity of meaning all other symbols on the chancel. This one symbol tells the gospel story, the Christian good news.

It is a cross formed of hammered iron to insure permanence and a feeling of strength. Used in combination with the crown it speaks of Christ's death and resurrection as victory over sin and death. It reminds one that Christ is "King of Kings" (Rev. 17:14 and 19:16). Because he was resurrected, eternal life is promised the faithful who love Christ. This is the "crown of life" mentioned in James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10.

The chains recall the seamless robe and symbolize Christ's passion, death and resurrection (John 19:24 and 11:25).

The cross is 24 feet long and 13 feet wide.

## THE PULPIT AND TESTER

Next to the font is the pulpit, the platform from which the minister proclaims the "word of God." The preaching, prophetic, interpretative function of the pastor has held a central place in the church from the beginning. It was central to Jesus' own ministry.

The tester or sounding board above the preacher is for acoustical purposes only.

The hanging (parament) on the pulpit desk indicates by color the current season of the Christian year. Monograms on the hangings usually are symbols of Jesus Christ

The pulpit is a combination of black walnut and hammered iron.

## THE BAPTISMAL FONT

The baptismal font, carved from Vermont marble, is one of five centers of worship on the chancel. It has been cut from a solid block of stone especially for this sanctuary. On the face is the symbol of the descending dove as designed by the consulting architect, and used also on all the entry doors of the building. It recalls the descent of the Holy Spirit when Jesus was baptized by John at the Jordan River (Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22, John 1:32). It is widely recognized as a symbol of the Holy Spirit and is suggestive of renewal, regeneration, and new life which the Holy Spirit affects and sustains.

The beautiful hammered iron lid to the font is embossed with the symbols of the fish representing Jesus Christ, and the scallop shell another sign of the baptism. Early church artists depict John the Baptist pouring water from a scallop shell when baptizing Jesus.

Rising from the lid are graceful silver arches simulating the flow of water from a fountain. The font weights 5200 lbs.

## THE COMMUNION TABLE

The open table set out from the chancel wall and free-standing is a conscious return to the original setting of the Lord's Supper. Christ and the twelve disciples sat or reclined around a table in the Upper Room for the final meal together and the symbolic breaking of bread and sharing of the cup.

The meaning of the Lord's supper or Holy Communion is represented by carvings on the central panel. Wheat and a cluster of grapes used together mean the Holy Communion (Matthew 26:29, Mark 14:25, Luke 22:18). Wheat also stands for the "bread of life" (John 6:35).

The Alpha (A) and Omega (**insert omega sign**) are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. When used in connection with the symbols referring to Christ, such as the cross which transfixes them in this carving, they indicate the timelessness and the eternity of Christ. In Revelation he is reported as saying, "I am the beginning and the end, the first and last" (Rev. 22:13, 1:8 and 21:6).

The table is solid walnut and weighs approximately 1000 lbs.

## THE CANDLES

A candle in Christian worship replaces the ancient lamp as the symbol of Christ, “the light of the world” (John 8:12 and 9:5).

The two groups of candles here have the same meaning as two candles. They represent the twofold nature of our Lord—his humanity and divine nature.

The eight candles also represent the eight Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-11 and Luke 6:20-22) which are Christ’s summary of the Christian attributes. Traditionally the number eight is symbolic of rebirth. A 13<sup>th</sup> century Bishop Durandus proposed that since it took 7 days for creation, the 8<sup>th</sup> day was then significant of “the new creation” in Christ.

## THE LECTERN

The reading stand or lectern itself emphasizes the paramount importance of reading from the Holy Scriptures in public worship as did Jesus in his first public appearance at Nazareth (Luke 4: 16-21). In modern usage it also stresses the teaching or interpretive role of the Church.

The grape vine and branches adorning the carved cross on the face of the lectern symbolize the unity of the church (John 15:5). The text embossed on the upright shaft of that cross is “I am the true vine” (John 15:1) which indicates that Christian growth and unity stem from Christ alone.

## THE OPEN BOOK

The bible or Holy Scriptures is an authoritative source of the Christian Faith. The Old and New Testaments contain “all truth required for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ” (see the Methodist ritual of ordination). They are a record of God’s action and man’s response during Hebrew-Early Christian history. They record God’s manifestation of himself in Jesus Christ and the response of mankind which led to the formation of the Christian Church.

The New Testament especially is the story of a loving God who pours out His love to all men and gives them all He has to give. Such a message is “good news” rightly read in the sanctuary and proclaimed from the pulpit.

## THE ORGAN : : THE CHOIR LOFT

The rhythm and melody of hymnody and music have always been proper vehicles for the expression of man's praise and prayer. Following the Lord's Supper it is recorded that Jesus and the disciples sang a hymn as they departed (Mark 14:26). And the Apostle Paul in several passages revealed that hymns, spiritual songs, singing and melody had a regular place in early Christian worship (Eph. 5;19, Col 3:16).

For leadership in congregational singing and worship in music a fully-voiced Aeolian-skinner Pipe Organ has been donated to the Church. It is housed in the chamber directly behind the choir loft and consists of 55 ranks totaling 3600 pipes. This organ is of concert quality and will be used for the cultural enrichment of the community as well as in regular services of worship.

The choir loft itself is so situated on the chancel that the choirs may be clearly seen as they bring musical leadership in the services, but will also be out of the line of vision during other portions of the worship. The position at the south end of the chancel opposite the pulpit gives the choristers an identity with the rest of the worshiping congregation.

**This booklet has been prepared to commemorate the consecration  
of First Methodist Church on Sunday, April 4, 1965.**