



Landmark Nomination

1. Name

historic First United Methodist Church of Whitewater

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 145 S. Prairie St.

city, town Whitewater congressional district

state WISCONSIN code 055 county Walworth

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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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 type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Corporation of the First United Methodist Church of Whitewater

street & number 145 S. Prairie St.

city, town Whitewater _____ vicinity of state WI ZIP 53190

5. Location of Legal Description (In County Courthouse)

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Walworth County Courthouse

street & number

city, town _____ state Wisconsin

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records

city, town _____ state

7. Description

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

Built in 1872-73 for \$30,000 in the English Gothic tradition, the First United Methodist Church is located on the corner of Center and Prairie Streets. James Cox, a local mason originally from England, supervised the building, assisted by other local masons and a large force of volunteers.

Although part of the larger Methodist organization, this community of Methodists had a great deal of influence on the design of their church. It was their hope to build an impressive structure, a church outstanding among those outside of Milwaukee. Their decision to build a grand structure while remaining "good stewards of the church's money" shaped the resulting building.

The general appearance departs from Gothic in the lack of ornamentation. The use of ornamentation in Gothic design served to draw attention from the material and direct it toward the spiritual. English Gothic structures were chiefly built of wood and were highly decorative. Instead we see in this structure frugality, austere sparseness, an impressive building which is not ornate or wasteful. We see economy in the choice of locally produced cream colored brick (as opposed to red or brown brick or stone).

The general shape of the original church was rectangular, with a smaller gable roofed projection on the north wall. The main facade and entryway faces south on Center Street with an additional front entryway at the base of a southwest diagonally facing corner bell tower constructed in 1898. The front rises beyond three stories to a peaked gable roof of fan-vaulted construction. On the front, center, a large stained glass Gothic arched window with smaller tracery arches within sits above three smaller arched windows. Directly below, rests the flatter basket or Tudor arch of the main entryway.

Salient buttresses, running from ground to roof edge, are an important structural and architectural feature of this building. They lend support to the walls while presenting a strong interplay of vertical lines. Three buttresses on the east front corner visually balance the tower on the west front corner. One of the three buttresses rises above the roof edge to become a small steeple. Buttresses also emphasize the four corners of the tower and architectural features of the side walls.

Cantilevered brick corbelling, running around the building just below the roofline imitates an English decorative wood bargeboard. The same cream colored brick is used, the shadow of which creates a line, serving to break up the solid mass of the walls.

8. Significance

(Continue on separate sheets if necessary)

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (Give specific sources for all statements of fact.)

The Whitewater First United Methodist Church represents an important part of the religious and architectural history of this community. At the time of construction, this church was uniquely impressive. Use of locally produced materials by local builders is of significant interest and the cream colored brick relates well to other locally significant structures.

Decidedly unembellished, this structure represents a frugal design philosophy of its time. Beautiful in its simplicity and scale, this building is of notable historic and architectural interest to the community.

The information included in this application is from the Whitewater First United Methodist Church's written history supplied by Mrs. Mildred Hill and through interviews with Ardys T. Dunwiddie and Mrs. Elsie Hilton, great-granddaughters to the builder, James Cox; and Mrs. Catherine Crossman, a member of the Methodist congregation.

Windows in the original part of the church include painted glass in the English tradition. There are two tiers of windows on the east and west sides of the original building. The upper tier forms Gothic arches, the lower tier, flatter basket arches. The sides of the tower have arched windows, vertically stacked with three side-by-side arched openings into the upper tower area. The tower roof is formed by an octagonal "circle" of gables rising to a high peaked steeple. A simple Gothic quadrafoil design molding decorates the wooden main entryway doors.

The main body of the church structure remains essentially as it was originally. The Educational Wing with Chapel attached in 1950 wraps around the rear west, the north and the rear east sides at the height of two stories. Built in the blockish architectural style of the time, no attempt was made to tie the design of the wing to that of the original structure except for the choice of cream colored brick. Brick style and construction methods were modern. Brick is combined with Lannon stone on the south facing addition entryway. Modern rectangular stained glass windows complete the east side of the addition.

During the construction of the foundation for this addition, the projection on the north side, to the rear of the main altar, housing the pipe organ, collapsed when the earth supporting that portion of the structure was undermined. This collapse also caused damage to the main roof. The projection was rebuilt with an arched window added to the upper north wall above the addition, one chimney was rebuilt where there had originally been a symmetrical pair.

In 1980 the brick exterior was brush sandblasted, silicon sealed and tuckpointed.

Additional paragraph for significance statement:

The First United Methodist Church is being nominated as a Whitewater Landmark because it is an excellent example of the Gothic Revival style of architecture, a style of immense popularity for religious structures in Wisconsin. The steeply-pitched roofline, large buttresses, and gothic arched openings are all important elements of the style. The First United Methodist Church sits prominently on its lot, a physical landmark to those who pass by. And, while Whitewater has several fine religious structures elsewhere in the community, the First United Methodist Church is distinguished from them by its size and fine Gothic design.