Fire at Ada First Methodist Church

Tuesday, March 13, 2012
In 1855 the Methodists of Ada organized a congregation, whose first meeting place was the village’s school. In 1864, services were held in the Presbyterian Church.

By 1867 their numbers had grown to the extent that a building committee was organized to erect a permanent church. This resulted in a building, dedicated in 1871, on the corner of Hoosier St. (later Highland) and North Gilbert St.

By the early 1890’s, it was obvious that a yet larger facility was required, and plans were laid for what, in 1899, would become the imposing church on North Main St.
1892
M.E. Church on corner of N. Gilbert and W. Hoosier
(later Highland St.)

Heterick Memorial Library - University Archives
Future Site of First M.E. Church, 1892
Postcard picture shortly after construction, 1899
Sanctuary looking east toward Main St.

Heterick Memorial Library - University Archives
"WE ARE ALL SAFE"

First United Methodist Church destroyed by fire

By Jca Brooks
Herald Correspondent

ADA — On Wednesday afternoon, Ada Patrol Officer Matt Purdy was on patrol and noticed smoke coming from the roof of the Methodist Church and advised dispatch to respond with fire equipment while checking to ensure that no one was in the building, according to a Press Release by the Ada Police Department. A preschool program was in session in the basement, but upon hearing the smoke alarms, quickly and safely evacuated all the children and the UMC pastor across the street to the library. No injuries were reported.

The fire seemed to spread rapidly. "I went to grab a sandwich at noon and when I came back 10 minutes later there was smoke from the roof of the church and the windows broken soon after," recounted Firefighter Dave Zimmerly, who has been with the fire department for 25 years. "When we entered the building we couldn’t even see the flames because the smoke was so thick. We were only in for a few minutes when debris began falling and we couldn’t advance for our own safety." Gesturing to his flashlight where his nightlight had melted and reflective stickers had bubbled from the heat, he added, "This is definitely one of the hottest fires I have ever seen."

Half an hour after emergency units were dispatched, help came from all directions. "Fire units from Alger, McGuffey, Kenton and Dunkirk as well as Bluffton and Lafayette responded to assist the Ada Liberty Fire Department. Several rescue units assisted the Ada Fire Department."

The 60th annual Pancake Sausage Day at the United Methodist Church has been cancelled for Thursday.
From East Highland St. looking N.W.

Heterick Memorial Library - University Archives
From W. Highland St. – Note ladder truck from Kenton

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From W. Highland St.

Heterick Memorial Library - University Archives
Rear of church – Ladder truck from Kenton Fire Dept.
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N.W. Corner of Church

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Late afternoon – fire mostly extinguished

Heterick Memorial Library - University Archives
Front of church from North Main St.

Heterick Memorial Library - University Archives
Next morning
From North Side of church Looking S.E. Toward Main St., June 23, 2012
Interior of Sanctuary Looking S.W. – June 23, 2012

Heterick Memorial Library - University Archives
Interior of Sanctuary Through Main Entrance. June 23, 2012

Heterick Memorial Library - University Archives
Architect’s rendering of new church. Construction begun Spring 2014