

Information Sheet

R First United Methodist Church (West Plains, Mo.).
359 Records, 1887-1988.
Eleven volumes and ten folders.

MICROFILM

This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri. If you would like more information, please contact us at shsresearch@umsystem.edu.

These are church registers, quarterly conference reports, and administrative records of the First United Methodist Church in West Plains, Howell County, Missouri. There are records of predecessor Methodist churches in West Plains, including the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Methodism in Howell County was pioneered by circuit riders in the 1860s. "Uncle Jackie" Collins, who began working in 1867, is usually credited as one of the earliest preachers in the area. The Methodists in West Plains at first shared a hall with the Masonic Lodge. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was organized about 1881, after which joint tenancy with the Masons was ended and a frame building was constructed solely for church services. Some of the members of the Masonic Lodge are said to have formed the nucleus of the Methodist Episcopal Church of West Plains, which was organized about 1883. Another group, the Congregational Methodists, was also active in Howell County, ca. 1883-1900. They organized in several locations, including West Plains.

Petitions by the congregations in 1927 led to the unification of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Episcopal Church of West Plains. After resolution of the details by joint commissions, the merger went into effect on 1 January 1928. The united congregation was styled the First Methodist Church and was placed under the leadership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The former Methodist Episcopal property was sold and a much larger brick edifice was constructed to accommodate the combined membership.

Unification of the West Plains churches preceded by eleven years the merger of the national bodies in 1939. At that time, the state conferences were reorganized to encompass all of the Methodist churches in Missouri. West Plains remained a member of the St. Louis Conference. In April 1968 the national Methodist Church merged with the Evangelical United Brethren Church to form the United Methodist Church. Local churches responded accordingly, the church at West Plains becoming the First United Methodist Church.

The records of the First United Methodist Church consist of membership records, conference reports and administrative records. The earliest records are those of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Those of the Methodist Episcopal Church do not seem to have been retained when unification occurred in 1928. The membership registers, ca. 1902-1988, include an incomplete record of combined membership after 1928. Reports of the quarterly conferences for 1887-1969 contain statistical information, reports on church programs, and comments on the spiritual condition of the church. Administrative records, 1929-1973, include treasurer's reports and other papers pertaining to property, real estate, and fiscal affairs. A group of miscellaneous papers includes the petitions for unification of the churches in 1927, correspondence regarding church indebtedness during the 1930s, and a scrapbook/history compiled ca. 1967-1972. There is also a pamphlet history of the Congregational Methodist churches in Howell County, 1970.

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Shelf List

These are church registers, quarterly conference reports, and administrative records of the First United Methodist Church in West Plains, Howell County, Missouri. There are records of predecessor Methodist churches in West Plains, including the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Volumes 1-6: Church registers, ca. 1902-1988.

Volume 01: Church register (MEC,S), ca. 1902-1925
Volume 02: Church register (MEC,S), ca. 1914-1917.
Volume 03: Church register (MEC,S), ca. 1928-1929.
Volume 04: Church register (MEC,S), ca. 1933-1941.
Volume 05: Church register, ca. 1949-1971.
Volume 06: Church register, ca. 1971-1988.

Volumes 7-11: Quarterly Conference records, 1887-1969.

Volume 07: Quarterly Conference Record (MEC,S), 1887-1892.
Volume 08: Church Conference Record (MEC,S), 1896-1929.
Volume 09: Quarterly Conference Record (MEC,S), 1921-1925.
Volume 10: Quarterly Conference Record (MEC,S), 1929-1940.
Volume 11: Quarterly Conference Record, 1940-1969.

Folders 1-5: Administrative records, 1929-1973.

Folder 01: Board of Stewards records, 1929-1930.
Folder 02: Board of Stewards records, 1931-1950.
Folder 03: Official Board reports, 1952-1958.
Folder 04: Official Board reports, 1958-1963.
Folder 05: Official Board reports, 1963-1973.

Folders 6-10: Miscellaneous records, 1927-1972.

Folder 06: Petitions for consolidation, 1927.
Folder 07: Cornerstone placement and church dedication, 1930-1938.
Folder 08: Correspondence, 1930-1938.
Folder 09: Scrapbook/history compiled by C. C. Smith, ca. 1967-1972.
Folder 10: "History of the First Congregational Methodist Churches in Howell County, Missouri, 1883-1970," by I. D. Galloway, 1970.

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