The History of First Presbyterian Church

In October 1869, the Rev. Wilberforce K. Boggs, an organizing pastor, was sent to Wichita by the Rev. Timothy Hill. A month later he began conducting Presbyterian services, which have been continuous ever since.

William Finn found an abandoned military dugout about one-half mile north of the settlement. It was located near the southeast corner of Jackson and 12th streets. Finn used the dugout for a school during the week and the Presbyterians used it as a church on Sundays with the first Sunday school meeting there November 7, 1869. First Presbyterian Church was officially organized on Sunday, March 13, 1870.

After discussion that decided the first ground obtained for the church was unsuitable, the congregation decided to build on lots donated by Eli Waterman at the southeast corner of Wichita and 2nd streets. While waiting for the new church to be built, the congregation met anywhere it could, including a livery stable. Although work on the church started in the late summer of 1870, work was slow and not completed until November 1870. Finally, at a cost of $1,500, the congregation had built a frame structure 25’ x 46’. The seats were pew-length boards resting on logs cut for them. Even this little pioneer church had an organ and very good music. The congregation had yet to raise enough money for bricks to build a chimney for the stove.

The congregation grew so rapidly that this building served less than two years. The congregation sold this building in November 1872 at a loss to the Catholics for $550.00.

These excerpts taken from This is Who We Are—A History of First Presbyterian Church.