

**The United Church of Christ and Pilgrim's Hall  
240 Fourth Street North  
HPC #92-02- Designated January 1993**



Built in 1912, the United Church of Christ (more commonly known as the First Congregational Church) is a fine example of Gothic Revival architecture, while the 1924 Pilgrim's Hall, a typical three-bay commercial building with gothic treatment complements the church well. The church was designed by Edgar Ferdon, while its contractor is unknown. Pilgrim's Hall, was designed by Henry H. Dupont The church and its congregation provided services and leadership to the citizenry of St. Petersburg for over one hundred years. During the 1920s the church was the site of a popular Lyceum series providing one of the few opportunities for the residents to attend cultural programs at the time.

The sanctuary's main facade is asymmetrical and contained three bays. The center bay consisted of a gable end of the main sanctuary and was highlighted by a large multi-paneled stained glass window flanked by buttressing. A rose window (a large, circular medieval window, containing tracery), dominated the gable of the church. The center bay was framed by two square towers. The northern tower was the most predominant and contains the main entryway to the church. The tower consisted of pointed arched entry doors, several small one-over-one stained glass windows and wooden louvered arched vents. This tower also housed the church bells. The second tower was a smaller less noticeable version of the main tower.

The First Congregational Church was significant as a religious institution. In October of 1888 the congregation organized itself into a church to be called "The United Church of Christ." After moving to three different meeting places, the congregation bought the property of the church's present site and in April of 1912, the present church was opened for services. Several of the original members of the First Congregational Church went on to be founding members of other St. Petersburg religious institutions.

During the 1920's the church, lead by Dr. Kerrison Juniper, sponsored the immensely popular Lyceum series, a Lecture Course and a Grand Artist Course." These meetings played an important role in the cultural development of the community. All profits from these meetings went towards the building fund for the church. Some of the artists performing in the Lyceum engagements were: William Jennings Bryan, Capt. Dennis Rooke, Efrim Zimbalist, the Russian Symphonic Choir, Will Rogers, E. B. Frost and Randolph Churchill. These meetings were popular with the members of the church as well as the citizens of the City.