

MVFUMC HISTORY

Methodism reached the corner of the Pacific Northwest known as Skagit in the late 1800's, less than forty years after the first missionary, Jason Lee, arrived to bring God's word to the wilderness. The first preaching was at Skagit City where the north and south forks of the Skagit River met. Since the river was the "freeway" at the time, most of the travel was by boat. Preaching places were established along the river as far as Lyman.

By 1872, a small group of believers sought organization of a church in Mount Vernon. There were twelve members who called on the Reverend G. H. Greer from Coupeville to be the organizing minister. The Board of Church Extension provided \$250 for the first building on lots acquired from Jasper Gates, a Mount Vernon founding father. At that time, Mr. Gates served as a trustee of the new church. The first building at 3rd and Gates Streets was dedicated in 1890 and in 1892 the Ladies Aid bought a parsonage for their minister's home. By 1904, the debt of \$440 was paid and this church served the congregation until 1910. As the congregation grew, they began looking for a new location.

A lot on the corner of 4th and Fulton Streets was selected and plans were made. The downtown church building was sold in 1911. The basement of the new church was made ready for occupancy in 1912. It was completed and dedicated by 1915. The second church was a beautiful structure graced with stained glass windows and rich woodwork. It was during this time Grace Methodist Church was closed and some of the members joined First Methodist Church.

By the mid 1950's the congregation had outgrown both the building at 4th and Fulton, and the location. Crowded rooms and lack of parking made a move necessary. Land was acquired on the edge of town at 16th and Division Streets and a Building Fund Drive began in 1954. The original cost estimate was \$300,000 at a time when the total yearly budget was \$16,185. Meeting the goal required true sacrificial giving on the part of the congregation. In 1957, the 4th and Fulton property was sold to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints for \$19,500. For the next three years the two congregations shared the building, a real lesson in cooperation.

The first service in the present church was held on August 31, 1960. An Education Wing was added in 1964 and a major remodel of the entry area and office spaces was completed in 2002. The church building we are in today is a tribute to the many who took literally the admonition to give their time, talents, gifts, and service to the glory of God.

Compiled by Mary Holmstrom for the 125th Anniversary Directory, Copyright 1997