**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

*(Type all entries – complete applicable sections)*

1. **NAME:**
   - Warren United Methodist Church
   - AND/OR HISTORIC:
     - First Methodist Church

2. **LOCATION**
   - STREET AND NUMBER:
     - 27 Church Street
   - CITY OR TOWN:
     - Warren
   - STATE:
     - Rhode Island, 02885
   - CODE:
     - 611
   - COUNTY:
     - Bristol
   - CODE:
     - 001

3. **CLASSIFICATION**
   - CATEGORY (Check One):
     - District
     - Site
     - Object
   - BUILDING
   - STRUCTURE
   - OWNERSHIP:
     - Public
     - Private
     - Both
   - Public Acquisition:
     - In Process
     - Being Considered
   - STATUS:
     - Occupied
     - Unoccupied
     - Preservation work
     - In progress
   - ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC:
     - Yes:
       - Restricted
     - Unrestricted

4. **OWNER OF PROPERTY**
   - METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
   - STREET AND NUMBER:
     - 27 Church Street
   - CITY OR TOWN:
     - Warren
   - STATE:
     - Rhode Island, 02885
   - CODE:
     - 611

5. **LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**
   - COUNCOURSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
     - Warren Town Hall
   - STREET AND NUMBER:
     - Main Street
   - CITY OR TOWN:
     - Warren
   - STATE:
     - Rhode Island, 02885
   - CODE:
     - 611

6. **REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**
   - STATEWIDE SURVEY OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS
   - DATE OF SURVEY:
     - Federal
     - State
     - County
     - Local
   - DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
     - Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
   - STREET AND NUMBER:
     - State House, 90 Smith Street
   - CITY OR TOWN:
     - Providence
   - STATE:
     - Rhode Island, 02903
   - CODE:
     - 611
The present United (or First) Methodist Church, fronting south on Church Street in Warren, Rhode Island, was built in 1868, the second church building on the site. The structure is a long (62' by 78') gable-roofed, two-story building with a full two-story Greek Revival portico and a steeple and spire built up of modified Georgian elements. The view of the building as seen from the Town Common is dramatic; adjacent eighteenth-century and Victorian buildings combine to establish it in an important historic environment.

Exterior:

Four colossal hand-hewn wooden Doric columns set upon \( \frac{1}{2} \)-square granite bases rise 32' to support a wide plain architrave with a narrow dentil-band below a plain frieze which supports a plain cornice framing the pediment. Four paneled pilasters divide the façade wall into bays, each of which contains a single 9-over-9-sashed window on the ground level and a two-story compound 9-over-9 window above, all with heavy, molded lintels. This pattern of wall pilasters and fenestration is continued on the sides of the church. Flush boards are used for the front wall cover; the sides are clapboarded.

The main front entrance is not original. The original flat-headed entrance containing massive, eight-paneled double doors was replaced in 1958 by the present doorway of smaller scale, carrying a broken-scrolled pediment and containing smaller doors beneath a transom. (An additional entrance on the church's east side was closed in 1869.) On the north end of the church building, the sanctuary projects 6', with no windows except a small round-headed one at the northwest corner, near a plain rear entrance to the vestry.

The steeple, of retardataire Georgian form has three square, graduated stages leading to an octagonal cupola-base for the small spire with a simple arrow weathervane; the spire's termination is 130' from the ground. The steeple's first level is a horizontally-rusticated square indented at its angles, with narrow triple openings on each side. It contains a great bronze bell placed there by the town in 1853, at an original cost of $700.00, to enable the clock to sound the hours. This bell was originally rocked by a great wooden wheel, to swing the striker inside; today the bell is hit by a metal hammer operated by a rope pull. A widely-projecting cornice originally carrying acroteria (now removed) crowns this stage of the steeple.

The steeple's second level has paneled corner pilasters and low projecting panels containing acroteria motifs on each side, below the four clock-faces, which are painted black and have their original gold numerals. Inside, naturally, is the clock room, where in 1848 the town placed iron clock-works (inoperative now and awaiting repair) with 300-pound weights.

(See Continuation Sheet.)
7. Description.

The smaller third level of the steeple repeats that of the clock level and is pierced by 6-over-6 windows of battered shape with heavy architraves. Upon this stage rises the delicate octagonal cupola, with panelled pilasters and eight windows, which supports the panelled, wood-sheathed spire and the weather vane with its gilded arrow.

During renovations in 1970 the acroteria upon the cornice of the bell tower (and these may have originally been a repeated adornment at the upper levels of the steeple) were removed due to deterioration and have not been replaced.

Interior.

The church auditorium is reached by stairs at either side of a large, high front hall which contains a balcony and a catwalk from it to the bell rope. Staircases have massive turned newel posts and rectangular wood balusters that continue across the balcony. Walls are plastered down to a wainscot of horizontal flush boards.

The auditorium, designed to seat 500, is nearly square, measuring 60'6" wide and 65'6" deep. The pew plan is laid out with a wide center aisle and side aisles; the original box pews are still in place. The side balconies have plain fronts of recessed paneling and are each supported by four round wooden columns with Doric capitals. The original choir loft or rear balcony is now closed off by a solid wall.

An 1876 stereoscopic photograph of the altar wall is of great interest, showing that area before the present organ was installed in 1907. This shows painted trompe-l'oeil decoration representing two great Ionic columns set in front of a pilastered wall; these columns support an entablature with frieze and dentils below a panelled ceiling. The painted perspective creates an illusion of great depth in what is actually a very shallow platform. This old view also shows details painted on the pilaster capitals on each side of the platform, a Greek-key frieze around the panelled ceiling and a band of dentils on the continuous entablature— all seen today without this ornamentation. Church records suggest that all these elaborations may have been added in 1869.

Today, two colossal free-standing fluted Ionic columns stand at the rear of the auditorium, slightly forward (north) of the choir balcony and the curving vestibule wall; they support the main cornice of the auditorium at that end of the building. The now-vanished painted columns may have been intended to echo these.

Original colors of the auditorium, of its elaborately painted trompe-l'oeil pulpit area and its ornamental ceiling are unknown. In the refurbishing of 1951 the now coved, originally compartmented, ceiling was painted a pale blue-green. The walls are soft beige. Stronger

(See Continuation Sheet 2.)
7. Description.

Colors are introduced through use of dark red velvet window drapery, scarlet carpeting and dark red pew cushions. The box pews are a soft grey-green and have their original carved, curvilinear mahogany armrests.

Repair to the interior of the steeple has been extensive. All the main vertical members here have either been replaced or repaired. Elsewhere, horizontal metal cross-pieces have been added where required; iron brackets have been used; and some of the great 12"x12" wood beams and rafters have been replaced. In the church attic, the original wood pegs tying rafters and braces together are, however, still performing their function in many places.
Historically, the Warren church is the first Methodist church in Rhode Island and the third in New England.

The present church building of 1844 stands on land given by John Luther in 1794 and on the site of the first church building, dedicated on September 24 of that same year. The story of Methodism in Warren began in 1789 when the Reverend Daniel Smith, an associate of the Reverend Jesse Lee, a noted pioneer of Methodism, held the first meeting in Kickemuit, now East Warren. By 1793, the Reverend Philip Wager had been appointed first minister of Warren Church. By 1844 his little church had been outgrown, and in that year—during a period of great commercial prosperity in Warren, generated by sea trade, ship-building and whaling—the congregation decided to erect a larger building.

This building is an excellent example of the vernacular architecture (here in the Greek Revival style) which is an important part of our American heritage. Not only is the church an outstanding architectural landmark, but it is located in the heart of Warren's historic waterfront area, where enough of the town's early building remains to warrant designation as an historic area. A full survey of the whole area is now being completed for the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

This handsome church, opening onto the Town Common, facing Church Street quietly lined with small-scale houses dating from the 1740's to the 1860's, is an irreplaceable element in this close-knit historic neighborhood.


The Providence Journal (Providence, Rhode Island), March 1, 1971, p. 29.


### Geographical Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corner</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

Degrees Minutes Seconds

Degrees Minutes Seconds

Approximate Acreage of Nominated Property: Less than one acre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>County</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

Form Prepared by:

Elizabeth S. Warren, Assistant Survey Director

Organisation: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

Date: March 29, 1971

Street and Number: State House, 90 Smith Street

City or Town: Providence

State Liaison Officer Certification

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

- National [ ] State [x] Local [ ]

Name

Title

Date

National Register Verification

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date
8. **Significance.**

The house was built in 1858 by the Methodist Church as a parsonage and has remained as such to the present. It has suffered no remodeling and all of the exterior detail has been preserved intact. As it still serves its original purpose and maintains its original appearance, the parsonage is a fine vernacular example of the Italian Villa style.

This is one of the few instances in the history of vernacular building where the names of the men who were responsible for the design and execution of the building are known. A building contract between the Building Committee of the Methodist Church and the carpenter survives. Ezra Millard Martin (1818-1900) of Warren agreed to construct the building following the plans and detailed drawings of "Hoar and Drown". Lewis Thomas Hoar (1810-1881) was Martin's partner in a local lumber business and the Drown referred to was either Henry Francis (1818-1899) or Joshua Champlin (1821-1907), brothers and both carpenters in Warren. None of these men were architects. They were born in and spent their lives in the immediate area and the parsonage reflects their provincialism and lack of professional training. Their version of the Italian Villa has been modified in accordance with their knowledge and capabilities. They did succeed in capturing the basic qualities of the style and showed their individuality in the truly splendid brackets beneath the cornices.

The parsonage is as fine an example of vernacular architecture in the Italian Villa style as the church is in the Greek Revival. Moreover, the parsonage survives unaltered. The church and parsonage are considered one property and together form an integral part of Warren's historic waterfront district.

9. **Major Bibliographical References.**

Building Contract Between the Building Committee of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Warren and Ezra M. Martin, January 27, 1858.


The Warren Directory, 1876, 1881.

Record of Deaths, Town of Warren.

10. **Geographical Data:** Same as on original nomination.

11. **Form Prepared by:**
Mrs. Richard P. Sullivan, Grants Administrator
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
John Brown House, 52 Power Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02906

January 22, 1973
Code: 44
1. Name.
   Common: Warren United Methodist Church--Addition of Parsonage to
   Original Nomination
   And/or Historic: First Methodist Church
2. Location: Same as on original nomination
3. Classification: Same as on original nomination.
4. Owner of Property: Same as on original nomination.
5. Location of Legal Description: Same as on original nomination.
6. Representation in Existing Surveys: Same as on original nomination.
7. Description.
   Condition: Excellent, Unaltered, Original Site

   The Methodist Parsonage is to the west of the Church. The main
   part of the building is 25'6" by 33', the rear projection 19' by 17',
   and the east projection 5' by 17'. These combine to form the precise
   rectilinear masses of the Italian Villa style. The parsonage has a one-story
   veranda extending from the east projection to the front of the building,
   is a full two stories in height throughout, and has a flat roof. The
   foundation is of slate stone cemented and grooved on the outside to
   imitate granite, the walls are wooden clapboards over frame construc-
   tion, the single chimney is of brick, and the front steps are of granite.

   The exterior detail is typical of the Italian Villa style and the
   1853 date of construction. The entrance, situated in the corner created
   by the east projection, is framed by sidelights and a cornice supported by
   four scrolled brackets. A heavy cornice supported by two scrolled
   brackets of the type above the doorway crowns each window, while a projecting sill
   with a pair of curved brackets beneath further enforces the styling. By
   far the most outstanding element of the architecture is the elaborately
   scrolled brackets beneath the main cornice with a scroll for every appear-
   ing on the porch. The S-scroll design, which stylized to a carefully
   extend is the greatest achievement of the carpenter's hand. The designer's
   originality is the greatest achievement of the carpenter's hand. The designer's
   originality. On the veranda the colonnade of large square columns tran-
   sition-to-the-square, moulded entablature and heavy brackets also
   embellish the cornerboards and backboards. Inside the parsonage the most
   noteworthy feature is the staircase with its vigorously turned, mahogany newel post and turned balusters. Unlike the exterior decoration,
   the interior is in the Second Greek style.
**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**Rhode Island**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

*(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENTRY NUMBER</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **NAME**

   - **COMMON**: Warren United Methodist Church
   - **AND/OR HISTORIC**: First Methodist Church

2. **LOCATION**

   - **STREET AND NUMBER**: 27 Church Street
   - **CITY OR TOWN**: Warren
   - **STATE**: Rhode Island, 02885

   - **CODE**: 44
   - **COUNTY**: Bristol
   - **CODE**: 001

3. **PHOTO REFERENCE**

   - **PHOTO CREDIT**: A. R. Medley
   - **DATE OF PHOTO**: November 10, 1970
   - **NEGATIVE FILED AT**: A. R. Medley, 30 Hawthorne Avenue, Barrington, Rhode Island, 02806

4. **IDENTIFICATION**

   - **DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.**
     - Steeple after renovation.
### Property Photograph Form

**State:** Rhode Island  
**County:** Bristol  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry Number</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Name | Warren United Methodist Church  
|      | AND/OR HISTORIC: First Methodist Church |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>27 Church Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| City or Town | Warren  
| State | Rhode Island, 02885 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Bristol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Photo Reference | Photo Credit: A. C. Eldridge, in Warren United Methodist Church records  
|                 | Date of Photo: 1874; copy negative, 1971 |
|                 | Negative Filed At: Rhode Island Historical Society, 52 Power Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02906 |

| Identification | View of (north) pulpit area of church auditorium, showing painted architectural background therein and showing auditorium ceiling, cornice etc. as then picked-out by colored painting of details. |
**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**  
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

*(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. NAME</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMON</td>
<td>AND/OR HISTORIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren United Methodist</td>
<td>First Methodist Church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. LOCATION</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td>COUNTY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>Bristol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. PHOTO REFERENCE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHOTO CREDIT DATE</td>
<td>NEGATIVE FILED AT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Warren</td>
<td>November 1969</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. IDENTIFICATION</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View of parsonage from the southeast.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
## PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. NAME</th>
<th>COMMON</th>
<th>AND/OR HISTORIC</th>
<th>NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Warren United Methodist Church</td>
<td>First Methodist Church</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. LOCATION</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>TOWN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>Warren</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STREET AND NUMBER</th>
<th>27 Church Street, (Parsonage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. PHOTO REFERENCE</th>
<th>PHOTO CREDIT</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>NEGATIVE FILED AT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elizabeth Warren</td>
<td>November 1969</td>
<td>Elizabeth Warren</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. IDENTIFICATION</th>
<th>DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Detail of porch and roof cornices. View from the east.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **NAME**
   - **COMMON**: Warren United Methodist Church
   - **AND/OR HISTORIC**: First Methodist Church

2. **LOCATION**
   - **STREET AND NUMBER**: 27 Church Street
   - **CITY OR TOWN**: Warren
   - **STATE**: Rhode Island, 02885
   - **CODE**: 44
   - **COUNTY**: Bristol
   - **CODE**: 01

3. **MAP REFERENCE**
   - **SOURCE**: U.S. Geological Survey
   - **SCALE**: 1:24,000
   - **DATE**: 1955

4. **REQUIREMENTS**
   - **TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS**
     1. Property boundaries where required.
     2. North arrow.
     3. Latitude and longitude reference.