



First United Methodist Church

The Heart of Downtown Gainesville 352-372-8523
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Gainesville Methodists -- A Brief Church History

- 1857 Methodist Trustees purchase from the County Commission the North half of Block 4 Range 8 for \$5.00
- 1859-71 A small meeting house was built in 1859, but it was taken over by Federal troops and badly damaged during the Civil War, making it unfit for use. So, the Methodists met at various locations including the Courthouse, the School, and the Presbyterian Church. In 1871, the old church building was torn down and the lumber sold for \$30.00.
- 1874 A [second wooden building](#) was erected by the Gainesville Methodists at the corner of N.E. First Street and N.E 4th Avenue. After 1887, it was used temporarily by the youth and the W.C.T.U. Eventually it was sold and moved to the corner of N.E. 2nd Street and N.E. 3rd Avenue, and converted into a home.
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- 1883 East Florida Seminary built a red brick administration building just to the North of the church, which was used until 1905. It was then used by the University of Florida until the campus moved to the West of downtown. Our trustees purchased the property in 1911 and renamed it [Epworth Hall](#). The building was remodeled in 1942 and again in 1973.
- 1886-1887 Methodists erected a red brick building and named it Kavanaugh Memorial Church in honor of their bishop. It had a bell tower, stained glass memorial windows and a pipe organ. This building was converted into Fellowship Hall and the Christian Worker's Chapel in 1942.
- 1942 The current Gothic style sanctuary was built between Epworth Hall and Fellowship Hall, the buildings being connected by cloisters into one large unit.
- 1948 A Scout Cabin was built on the South side of the property; renamed Burt Ames Cabin in 1955.
- 1949-55 Two wooden houses North of Epworth Hall were used for Sunday School classes. The Susannah Hall building was given to Centenary Methodist Church and the Burkhim House was dismantled in 1955.
- 1956 Joseph F. Bell Hall was consecrated. This building contains 17 classrooms, our preschool, library and the church offices.
- 1960 North Hall was purchased by the church for additional office and meeting space. The former apartment building is believed to have been built around 1912.
- 2003 North Hall was renovated and it was renamed Selle Hall. Our Gainesville District Superintendent's office is in this building.
- 2007 Sanctuary renovated. Organ rebuilt and a new facade of pipes added.
- 2012 Fellowship Hall renovated.