

# MANHATTAN'S HISTORIC LANDMARKS & DISTRICTS

## First Congregational Church

The First Congregational Church was constructed in 1859 and exhibits Late Victorian Gothic Revival Architecture, popular in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Founded in 1856 by Reverend Charles E. Blood, the First Congregational Church and its first leaders, were directly connected to eras and events of national significance like abolitionism, the American Home Missionary Society, Bleeding Kansas, the American Civil War, and the Morrill Land Grant Act.

Reverend Blood and his wife, Mary, arrived in Juniata (the first white settlement north of present-day Manhattan) in 1854. The move was sponsored by the American Home Missionary Society, which was a well-known abolitionist organization opposed to the spread of slavery to the new territories of

Kansas and Nebraska. Reverend Blood was a founding member of the Boston Town Association (which became Manhattan) and Mary was the town's first school teacher. Reverend Blood was also active in the Bluemont Central College (later Kansas State University) and was elected to the board of trustees.



First Congregational Church, 700 Poyntz Avenue

The original plan was for the church building to be located on the corner of 14<sup>th</sup> and Poyntz, where City Park is today. However, this location was considered too far out in the country so, at the suggestion of Reverend Blood, it was agreed that the church would be located at its present site – on the northeast corner of Juliette and Poyntz Avenues.

Since its construction in 1859, the church has grown considerably through several additions. The original structure was a simple, two-story gable-roofed rectangular block, constructed of cottonwood limestone, with stained glass windows, pointed arch windows, and typical Gothic Revival window tracery. In 1879, when the church underwent its first addition, a gable-roofed ell was added to the south elevation. In 1904, a large cross-gable addition was also added to the south elevation and, in 1989, a large addition to the west

elevation consisted of one flat and two gable-roofed wings.

*Source: Kansas State Historical Society  
National Register of Historic Places - Nomination Form*