



Cheryl Hoefler/Go! Magazine

The Gothic Revival-style Advent Christian Church presides over John Day's Main Street.

Historic church towers over John Day's Main Street

By Cheryl Hoefler
GO! Magazine

JOHN DAY — Five minutes. That's all you'll need to savor this stately slice of John Day's rich history.

The Advent Christian Church on Main Street has been presiding over the town's business district for more than 120 years. Built under the leadership of the Rev. Samuel Bayliss Hope, the building was completed and dedicated in 1900.

This ornate piece of architecture, with elaborate handiwork both inside and out, is an example of the Gothic Revival design popular for churches during that period. Especially noteworthy are the detailed designs on the entryway and bell tower, and a weather vane at the very top, all believed to be the work of Hope himself.

By the mid-1920s, the once-thriving congregation dwindled and the building became inactive. Over the ensuing years, it was rented at times by various Christian denominations. For a couple of years in the 1940s, the space was shared by the Seventh-day Adventists and Missionary Baptists, who were both attempting to buy the church.

Eventually the Seventh-day Adventists bought the church and made repairs. A dedication was held in August 1949 and a new flock flourished.

In 1969, a fire tore through the Main Street area, destroying many nearby businesses, but the church escaped with only minimal damage.

Eventually, the Seventh-day Adventist congregation moved on to a newer location, leaving the church empty — and for sale — once again.

In 1987, the newly formed John Day Historic Preservation Foundation partnered with the Grant County Chamber of Commerce to purchase the property. In 1992, it earned a spot on the United States National Register of Historic Places.

The parsonage building behind the church, used for a time by the Chamber of Commerce, is now home to the Grant County Genealogical Society.

The Advent Christian Church is on the northeast corner of Main and NW Bridge streets in John Day. Plenty of parallel parking is available on both streets.

Again, five minutes is all you'll need, though you will likely spend more time in order to truly appreciate this glorious gem.

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