

Bishop's Sand Creek Massacre Blog

Entry #2

February 5, 2014

My Dawning Awareness.

I first heard of the Sand Creek Massacre in Denver in 1996 when the General Conference adopted an “apology” for atrocities committed (more on that later). But I only *heard*, I didn't *learn*. I became bishop of the Denver Area on September 1, 2008. Until then my entire ministry had been in the Pacific Northwest. When I arrived several preaching invitations awaited me for local church anniversary celebrations. I agreed to preach in four churches celebrating their 150th anniversaries – sesquicentennials – during the second half of 2009. St. James UMC in Central City, Golden First UMC, Boulder FUMC and Trinity in Denver.

Since I was new to the area I researched each church and its community's history. I discovered that these four churches traced their histories to the first year Methodists sent missionaries to the gold country of Colorado. These anniversaries celebrated the arrival of Methodism in Colorado. I was surprised by how young the state was. Migration by ship to the northwest had been easier and earlier than migration to the interior of the continent by land.

In the next few posts I will lead you through some of the highlights of my first years in the Denver Area (Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and Utah) and my dawning awareness of the interwoven histories of the Methodist Church and the Native Peoples in this region.

April 19, 2009 – Riverton, Wyoming

I flew to Casper, Wyoming where David Burt, of the Yellowstone Conference picked me up and drove me to preach at Riverton UMC. On that drive I saw for the first time Sand Creek Massacre Trail signs along the road from Casper to Riverton.

