

NO PHOTO AVAILABLE

#### Front - Title/Description

##### ***Wesley United Methodist Church***

In 1830 circuit riders from Ohio began preaching in Niles, using the barroom of a local hotel. In 1832 nine worshippers formed the Methodist class that grew to be the Wesley United Methodist Church. They dedicated their first house of worship in 1839, and by 1840 they had organized a Sunday School to teach reading and religion. In 1862 the congregation laid the cornerstone for the present sanctuary. The structure was completed in 1863. The Dodge brothers of motor car fame attended Sunday School here during Joseph S. Tuttle's twenty eight year tenure as Sunday School Superintendent. In 1920, out of gratitude for his teachings, John F. Dodge gave Tuttle a life lease to his home on Main Street.

#### **Significant Date:**

Statehood Era (1815-1860)

**Registry Year:** 1979    **Erected Date:** 1982

#### Marker Location

**Address:** 302 Cedar Street

**City:** Niles

**State:** MI    **ZipCode:**

**County:** Berrien

**Township:** Niles

**Lat:** 41.82894100 / **Long:** -86.25600100

**Web URL:**

#### Back - Title/Description

The cornerstone of this handsome Italianate style church was laid in 1862. The pastor at that time was the Reverend William Sprague, who organized the first Methodist class in Niles in 1832. Sprague was presiding elder of the district for four years, a member of the U.S. Congress, and a state Indian agent. The church's architect is believed to have been Rufus Rose of Chicago, who designed several other notable structures in Niles. Construction was under the general supervision of Cass Chapman of Niles. Measuring forty six feet by seventy feet, the original edifice had two corner towers. The square pyramid roofed tower remains, but the mansard capped tower was removed in 1951. Over the years the church has had several additions and alterations, but the original wainscoting, woodwork, and windows have been retained.