

Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

*Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office, City Hall, Sixth Floor
808 Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, Washington 99201-3337*

1. Name of Property

Historic Name Liberty Park Methodist Episcopal Church
And/or Common Name Liberty Park United Methodist Church

2. Location

Street & Number E. 1526 11th Avenue
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA, 99202
Parcel Number 35213.2801

3. Classification

Category of Property	Ownership of Property	Status of Property	Present Use of Property
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both		<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> residential
<input type="checkbox"/> object	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes, unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other

4. Owner of Property

Name Liberty Park United Methodist Church
Street & Number 1526 E. 11th Avenue
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA, 99202-3504
Telephone Number/E-mail (509) 535-5588

5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds Spokane County Courthouse
Street Number 1116 West Broadway
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99260
County Spokane

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Title City of Spokane Historic Landmarks Survey
Date Federal__ State__ County__ Local 1979
Depository for Survey Records Spokane Historic Preservation Office

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(enter categories from instructions)

Condition☒ excellent☐ good☐ fair☐ deteriorated☐ ruins☐ unexposed**Check One**☒ unaltered☐ altered**Check One**☒ original site☐ moved & date _____

Narrative description of present and original physical appearance is found on one or more continuation sheets.

8. Spokane Register Criteria and Statement of Significance

Applicable Spokane Register of Historic Places Criteria--mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for Spokane Register listing:

☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Spokane history.

☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory history.

Narrative statement of significance is found on one or more continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography is found on one or more continuation sheets.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property. 23 ac. (10,125 sq. ft.)

Verbal Boundary Description:

Richland Park Addition, Block 3, All Lot 1; east ½ of Lot 2

Verbal Boundary Justification

11. Form Prepared By

Name and Title Frank Tobie, Chair, History Committee LPUMC

Organization Liberty Park United Methodist Church

Telephone Number/E-mail (509) 535-5588 (church) or (509) 535-1423

Street and Number 1526 E. 11th Avenue

City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA, 99202-3504

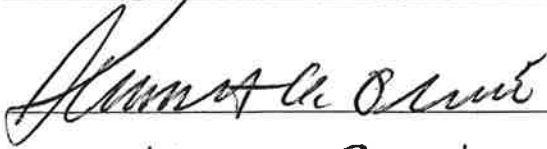
Date 03/05/2002

12. Additional Documentation

(See Attached)

Map

13. Signature of Owner(s)




Kenny Ororic Chair Administrative Council

14. For Official Use Only:

Date Received: _____ Attest: 

Date Heard: _____ City Clerk

Commission Decision: _____ Approved
as to Form: 

Council/Board Action: Approved Assistant City Attorney

Date: 5/13/02

We hereby certify that this property has been listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places.



CITY ADMINISTRATOR, City of Spokane
or

CHAIR, Spokane County Commissioners

CHAIR, Spokane City/County Historic Landmarks Commission



OFFICER, City/County Historic Preservation Officer
City/County Historic Preservation Office
Sixth Floor - City Hall, Spokane, WA 99201

Liberty Park United Methodist Church is located at the southwest corner of 11th Avenue and Helena Street, Spokane, on lot 1 and the east half of lot 2, block 3 in Richland Park Addition. It is in the Liberty Park Neighborhood, one block east of the South Perry Street commercial area, four blocks west of North Altamont and South Altamont Boulevards, and six blocks south of Liberty Park.

The building is brick veneer, square in shape, one and one-half stories in height, with a full basement. The main entrance is centered in the north façade, which is dominated by a tower that rises at the northeast corner of the building. The architectural style of the church is Late Gothic Revival with emphasis on the Gothic windows and the crenellated corner tower. The sanctuary is oriented to an altar in the southwest corner with curved oak pews in a quarter circle facing the altar area. This arrangement is known as the "Akron Plan," described in section 8.

The building has been carefully maintained since the church was completed in 1912 and is in excellent condition. Minor alterations have not compromised the historic appearance. There are stained glass windows in all four sides of the building. Each window has brown glass of varying shades around the edges extending to the peak or point of the Gothic arch, crossing below that in a graceful rounded arch, and in an open rectangle at the bottom. There is within each open rectangle a purple strip surrounded by light colored glass. The central area of each window is yellow, with surrounding blues, greens, and lighter colors. The north façade has two windows at the main level and a large stained glass window at the balcony level. The west side has two stained glass windows opening on the sanctuary in addition to two windows on the choir alcove and a Gothic window of frosted glass. The south side has three and the east side four in the Sanctuary and a large Gothic window in the corner tower. All of these original windows remain in use today. All window openings, as well as the openings for main-level entrances and the louvered openings in the tower rise to pointed arches characteristic of Gothic Revival architecture. The voussoirs are composed of buff brick matching the tracing that stands in pleasing contrast with the dominant red brick coloring of the building. The resulting polychromatic effect is also typical of Gothic Revival architecture.

There is a steep gable roof over the main structure with metal caps over the top of the gable ends. The simple silhouette is broken at the northeast corner by a tower with a pyramidal roof with a finial that rises above all. A belt course of buff brick articulates the parapet, which rises to a cornice adorned with dentals and other decorative treatment below the battlements.

The Sanctuary ceiling follows the steep gabled roofline. The choir alcove is in a rectangular raised stepped platform in the west side adjacent to the Altar. The balcony extends across the north end of the building and is reached by a stairway in the corner tower. The church's basement has a sloped ceiling due to the sloped floor of the Sanctuary. Curved horizontal beams and spaced vertical columns support it. The basement space is used for a library, craft classes, and other functions for the residents of the neighborhood. It also includes a furnace room, a storage room, bathrooms, and a

small kitchen. The east entrance to the basement has been remodeled for improved access and safety and security. Stairs extend up in the tower to the Sanctuary and Balcony levels.

The Liberty Park Church has been occasionally modified over the years, but it retains remarkable integrity. The former secondary entrance at the corner tower is no longer in use and the steps to it have been removed, but the opening remains evident and in use as a bulletin board. The open porch in the north façade has been enclosed, with a double wooden exterior Gothic door and stained glass pointed arched Gothic windows added. Plastic "bubbles" have been placed over the windows to protect the original stained glass. The original shingle roof has been replaced with an aluminum one, but it is largely consistent with the historic feeling and association of building and so does not detract from the integrity.

There have also been minor modifications to the interior. The Sanctuary has been slightly altered to improve the usability and appearance of the Altar area. The original basic hanging light fixture has been replaced for improved appearance and effectiveness, and additional lighting has been added for the Altar and Choir.

There is a Fellowship Hall and Church School building south of the church. This building, completed in 1956, is not part of this application. It is a separate structure, and the south exposure of the main church building including the three Gothic stained glass windows, remains as built. There is a connecting passageway at the southeast corner of the church at the basement and sanctuary levels. This Fellowship Hall and Church School building replaced the original "Bungalow" which served as Church and Sunday School until the completion of the main church in 1912 and continued as Sunday School until it was replaced.

The Liberty Park United Methodist Church is eligible for Category C for its architectural significance in its clear illustration, through distinctive characteristics, of early 20th century Gothic Revival architecture, and as a rare local example of the "Akron Plan," a style of interior layout that became the standard for Methodist and other Christian denominations by the 1890s. In its combination of the late Gothic Revival style of architecture and the Akron Plan layout, the Liberty Park Methodist Church is nearly unique in Spokane, as well as representative of a nation-wide period and method of construction that the National Park Service has recognized as significant by listing similar structures on the National Register of Historic Places. The church, moreover, has continuously served the same neighborhood congregation since its construction in 1912, and retains excellent integrity.

Architecture of Religious Buildings in Spokane

The 1978 Historic Landmarks Survey in Spokane listed 47 churches. Nine of these, including the Liberty Park United Methodist Church, have the distinctive characteristics that make up the vertical and picturesque qualities of the Gothic Revival style. While there is considerable variation in these churches, the pointed Gothic windows and steep roof pitches are common. The corner towers capped by steep roofs at First Presbyterian and Grace Lutheran churches are similar to Liberty Park. Of the nine Late Gothic Revival churches in Spokane, only one, the First Presbyterian Church, shares the Akron Plan sanctuary layout with the Liberty Park United Methodist Church. Grace Baptist Church, listed on the Spokane Register of Historic Places, has curved pews but is not an Akron Plan sanctuary; the other six all have standard rectangular sanctuaries with the altar situated at one end.

The church is a rare example of an early suburban church of quality design and construction. It remains substantially as built. Other churches featuring Late Gothic Revival architecture and an Akron Plan layout have received recognition for these significant distinctive characteristics, at both the local and national levels. The 1909 First Methodist Episcopal Church in Fullerton, California, for instance, has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, even though it does not retain the same degree of integrity that the Liberty Park Methodist Church does. Likewise, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission has designated the 1916 Hawthorne Lane United Methodist Church in Mecklenburg County North Carolina as a local historic landmark.

Gothic Revival Style

The Gothic Revival style emerged during the late 18th and early 19th centuries in the context of the romantic movement and its emphasis on the virtues of the Christian

medieval past. British architect Augustus Northmore Welby Pugin, who sought to revive England's medieval Catholic architecture, is generally recognized as the founder of the Gothic movement. Richard Upjohn, the British born founder and first president of the American Institute of Architects, figured prominently in the introduction of the Gothic Revival to the United States. The style is distinguished by the pointed arch, often combined with towers, steep gabled roofs, crenellation, foliated ornaments, tracery, and leaded glass windows, among other characteristics.

During the post-Civil War era, Gothic Revivalist architects became more eclectic, as they drew on German and Italian, in addition to British and French precedents, as well as on the ideas of English architecture theorist John Ruskin, who promoted the use of contrasting colors of stone brick and stone to produce a polychromatic effect. Late Gothic Revival architecture followed this era of the Ruskinian, or High Victorian Gothic. Late Gothic Revival buildings reflect a return to the French and, particularly, British emphasis of the Early Gothic Revival. They are generally quieter and smoother than the High Victorian structures, with simpler silhouettes and more muted polychromy.

While early Gothic Revival churches were built of stone, the Liberty Park Methodist Church, like most Late Gothic Revival churches, is built of brick. The muted polychromatic effect created by the contrast of the buff colored tracing and arches with the red brick of the building, and the simple silhouette also clearly place the church in the Late Gothic Revival style. The pointed arches of the stained glass windows and other openings, the steep pitched roof, and the crenellated tower at the northeast corner of the building also clearly define the church within the Gothic Revival style.

The Akron Plan

The Akron Plan is so named because it was popularized by Akron, Ohio architect, George W. Kramer, and a Methodist minister, Lewis Miller. Components of the plan include a corner pulpit platform and radial orientation of pews. Many churches designed in the Akron Plan also featured moveable pocket doors allowing for expansion of the seating area. The plan was first employed at the Methodist Episcopal Church in Akron, Ohio, and became popular throughout the United States thereafter. The popularity of the Akron Plan is associated with a turn of the century rise of evangelism that fostered a return to an older form; early Christians favored round churches, based on Roman baths and mausoleums, over the long churches adapted from Roman courthouses. The semicircular arrangement within the square or rectangular nave that characterized the Akron Plan harkened back to the circular arrangement preferred by early Christians.

Establishment and Early History of the LPMEC

Established in October 1905, the Liberty Park Methodist Episcopal Church is representative of the nation-wide popularity of the Akron Plan. As one of the earlier

suburban churches in Spokane, it also reflects a significant period of growth in the city's history. The Reverend William S. Turner, a retired Methodist pastor, was instrumental in the founding of the church, and was one of its 13 Charter Members. The group filed Articles of Incorporation in 1906, and Rev. Turner contributed from his life savings towards the purchase of a building site—lot 1 and the east half of lot 2, block 3, Richland Park Addition—for \$725. A bungalow constructed in 1909 on the site, at the southwest corner of Helena Street and Eleventh Avenue, served as the congregation's first church, but membership soon outgrew the structure.

Liberty Park Methodist Episcopal Church came into existence during a period of rapid growth in Spokane. The population of 36,848 in 1900 had grown to 104,402 in 1910. Much of this new growth occurred in suburbs like Liberty Park, where the growing membership of the church—the ranks of the 13 Charter Members swelled to 131 by 1911—required a new house of worship. A May 1910 article in the *Spokesman-Review* noted the membership's urgency, reporting that "the building will be rushed through to completion." The cost was expected to run to \$10,000.

The Church was built by its members. While the architect has not been documented, family tradition holds that Leonard Starr, an architect and member of Liberty Park Methodist, designed the church. Starr worked as a draftsman for notable Spokane architect Albert Held in 1909 and 1910 and also did occasional work for Cutter and Malmgren, Spokane's most celebrated architectural firm, between 1910 and 1913. He worked as an independent architect in 1916 and 1917, before moving to the Rockford area to take up farming. Building contractor Harry Belanger, another member of the church, was also a prominent figure in the construction of the building. It was Belanger, according to the Trustees Statement and Pledge, who presented, with Starr as witness, the plans for the church to the Methodist Board of Home Missions and Church Extensions in May 1910. Evan Walser, a bricklayer, mason, church trustee, and member of the church from 1906 to 1923 probably also figured prominently in the building's construction.

By November 1911 the church was nearing completion. *The Spokesman-Review* reported that "work is being rushed on the Liberty Park Methodist church...with the aim of dedicating it the first or second Sunday of December." The pastor, Reverend Thomas D. Moore, the article noted, expressed his "wish to have the church in readiness for the Christmas services....Rapid headway is being made on the interior," the *Spokesman* related, "but the storm has delayed work on the steps."

Despite such setbacks, the target date of Christmas was met. On December 15 the *Spokesman* announced the dedication ceremonies for Liberty Park Methodist, scheduled for Sunday December 18. A later article on the "Interesting Dedicatory Exercises" listed the Methodist dignitaries in attendance, including the Rev. Dr. Fletcher Homan, of Willamette University, former pastor Rev. A. Monroe, and the Rev. Dr. Charles E. Gibson, district superintendent, among others. Leonard Starr's wife, Bertha, sang at the ceremony. The church had been completed at the cost of \$11,700, and, the *Spokesman* reported, \$3,400 had been raised at the dedication, eliminating "all outside indebtedness

of the congregation, leaving only a debt of \$4000, which is a loan owed the church extension society.”

The church became an integral part of the suburban Liberty Park community, which included new homes and a shopping center on Perry Street. While a few residents had automobiles, most relied on the Washington Water Power and Inland Empire street car lines for easy access to downtown. The centerpiece of the neighborhood was its park, designed by the nationally renowned Olmstead Brothers, who had been retained by the Spokane Park Board in 1909 to prepare a Comprehensive Park Plan for the city.

Liberty Park United Methodist Church remains an integral part of the Liberty Park neighborhood, an area that is experiencing a period of renewed vigor. As an excellent example of early 20th century Gothic Revival architecture combined with an Akron Plan sanctuary layout, the Liberty Park United Methodist Church merits special recognition. It is being preserved as one of Spokane’s architectural gems, and as a historically significant church, a place for meetings, gatherings, and the spiritual needs of its community.

Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
LIBERTY PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SECTION 9 PAGE 1

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission. Surveys and Reports (The Hawthorne Lane United Methodist Church). Viewed 2/26/2002:
<http://www.cmhpf.org/S&RR/Hawthorne.html>

City of Fullerton (CA) National Register of Historic Places buildings in Fullerton (The First Methodist Episcopal Church). Viewed 2/26/2002:
<http://fullerton.idyllmtn.com/historicplaces/methodistchurch.htm>

City of Spokane Building Division, Engineering Services Division
Building Permits
Plat Map

Durham, N.W. *Spokane and the Inland Empire*. Spokane, WA: S.J. Clark Publishing Co., 1912, III: 200.

Ellis Hollow United Methodist Church (Tompkins CO., NY). "Centennial Celebration: '100 Years to the community.'" Viewed 2/26/2002:
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~nytompki/church/tehum.htm>

Goldberg, Shari. "The Colonial revival Style," in *Common Bond* 16, no. 1 (Summer 2000):

Historic Landmarks Survey, City of Spokane, 1978

Hudnut_Beumler, James. "The Many Mansions of God's House," (Vanderbilt University)

Klein, Marilyn W. and Fogle, David P. *Clues to American Architecture*. Starrhill Press, 1989.

Liberty Park Methodist Church.
Articles of Incorporation, Deed, other documents
Membership Records
Ledger Book, 1905-1929
Family Membership Records, 1929-
History Files
Photographs
Member Family Worksheets
"The Church Is The People," October 2000.

Matthews, Henry. *Kirtland Cutter: Architect in the Land of Promise*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1998, 386.

Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet
LIBERTY PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SECTION 9 PAGE 2

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. Alfred A Knopf, 1992.

Pacific Northwest Conference, United Methodist Church, Archives, Richard A. Seiber, loans, grants, correspondence between Liberty Park Methodist church and Methodist Board of Home Missions and Church Extension.
Spokane County Auditor's, Assessor's
Property, Deed, Mortgage Records

Phillips, Steven J. *Old House Dictionary*. American Source Books, 1989

Poppeliers, John C. et al. *What Style Is It?: A Guide to American Architecture*. Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press The National Trust for Historic Preservation), 1983.

Spokane Public Library Northwest Room
Drummond, Andrew Landale, "The Church Architecture of Protestantism, 1934 (726 R844)
Polk, R.L. and Co. *Spokane City Directories*, 1900-1920
Reference Books and Assistance
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Spokane, WA
"Souvenir—Albert Held, Architect, Spokane, WA" (917.9785 H366)
Spokane City Directories
Spokane City Maps

Starr Family interview. Henry Starr, Hayden, Idaho, recalls that Leonard Starr worked for a Spokane architect and that he drew up the plans for Liberty Park Methodist Episcopal Church.

The Spokane Daily Chronicle, 1910-1911.

The Spokesman-Review, "Start Work on Church," 5/19/1910, 8:6; "Hasten Work on New Church," 11/13/1911, 12:3; "Dedicate New Church," 12/15/1911, 18:5; "New Church Raises \$3400," 12/18/1911, 12:4.

Tobie, Frank. Photographs of 44 Spokane churches, August 2001.

Turner, Rev. William S. *Story of my Life*. Cincinnati: The Western Methodist Book Concern, 1904.

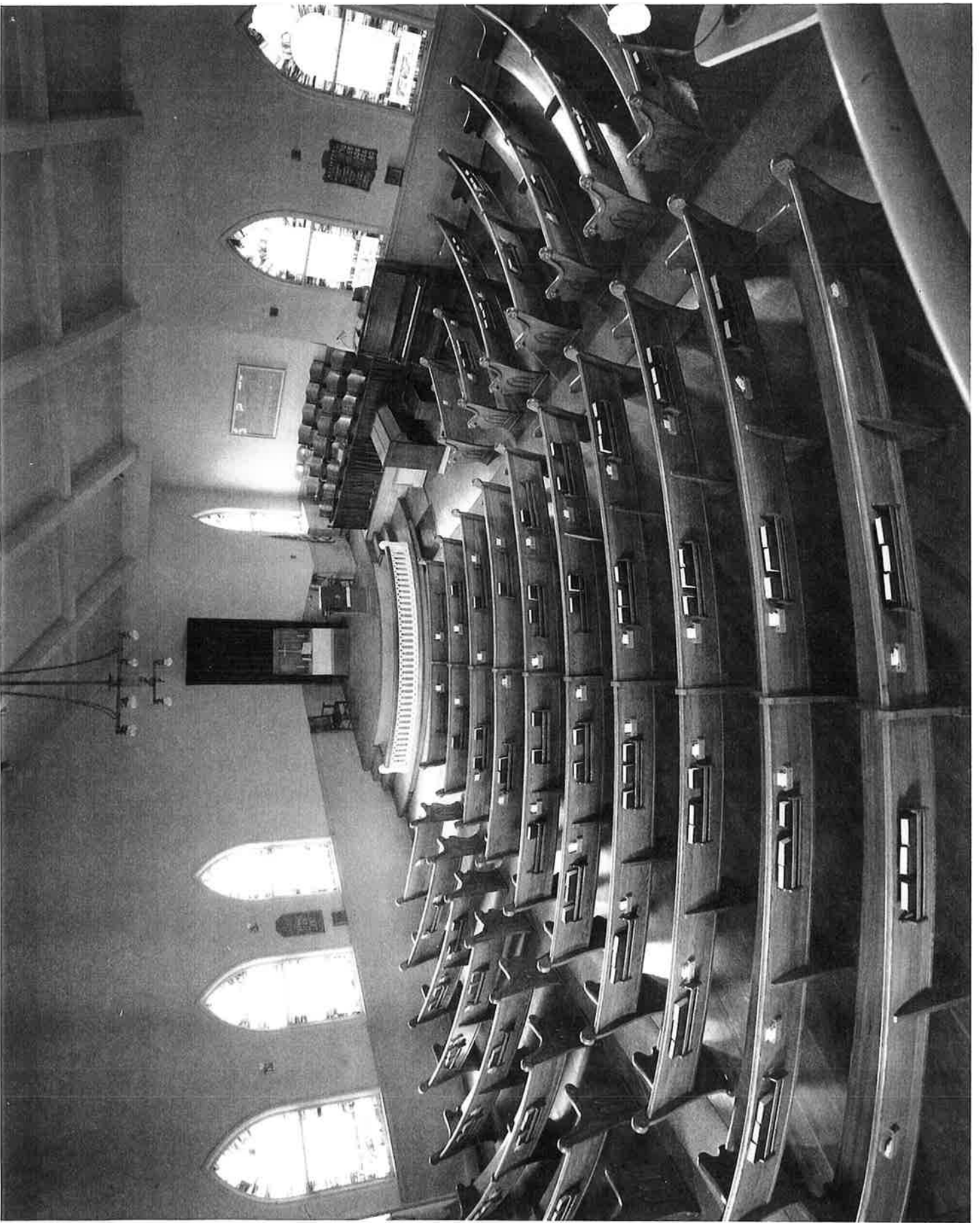
Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture Since 1780*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Church substantially as built. Bungalow at rear of Church.
Photo taken between 1947 and 1950.
2. Church interior, substantially as built.
3. Southeast corner of interior, showing entries and balcony.
4. Front porch enclosed, new steps, bulletin board in place of former corner entry.
New Fellowship Hall and Church School building has replaced Bungalow.
5. Church interior, with remodeled altar area.
1995 photo.
6. South façade of Church. New Fellowship Hall and Church School building
under construction. 1956 photo.
7. West façade of Church.
1994 photo.



TOM CHESTNUT
PHOTOGRAPHER



3





5



6



7

