

**NOMINATION OF PUBLIC INTERIOR PORTION OF BUILDING OR STRUCTURE  
PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM ON CD (MS WORD FORMAT)

**1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE** (must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)

Street address: 1600-1606 East Berks Street  
Postal code: 19147 Councilman District: 1

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: The Interior of St. Laurentius Roman Catholic Church  
Current Name: The Interior of St. Laurentius Roman Catholic Church

**3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Building Interior       Structure Interior

**4. PROPERTY INFORMATION**

Condition:     excellent     good     fair     poor     ruins  
Occupancy:     occupied     vacant     under construction     unknown  
Current use: Always used as a church until decommissioned.

**5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Please attach an interior plan with the boundary marked and written description of the boundary.

**6. DESCRIPTION**

Please attach a description of the historic resource and supplement with current photographs.

**7. INVENTORY OF FEATURES AND FIXTURES**

Please attach an inventory of all features including fixtures with their locations within the public interior portion indicated on architectural plans and/or annotated photographs (keyed to the plans).

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

Please attach the Statement of Significance.  
Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1885 to 1919  
Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: Original: 1885; Renovation: 1912; Organ Installed: 1919  
Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Architect: Edwin Forrest Durang; Thomas Kane, Plasterer  
Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Windows: van Treeck Studio, Munich; Hall Pipe Organ  
Original owner: Held in Trust for the People of St. Laurentius Church  
Other significant persons: NA

**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:**

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

**10. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Please attach a bibliography.

**11. NOMINATOR**

Name with Title: John Wisniewski  
 Organization: Friends of St. Laurentius  
 Street Address: 2813 Winchester Avenue  
 City, State, and Postal Code: Philadelphia, PA 19136  
 Nominator  is  is not the property owner.

Email: jr153@comcast.net  
 Date: October 27, 2015  
 Telephone: 215.906.1825

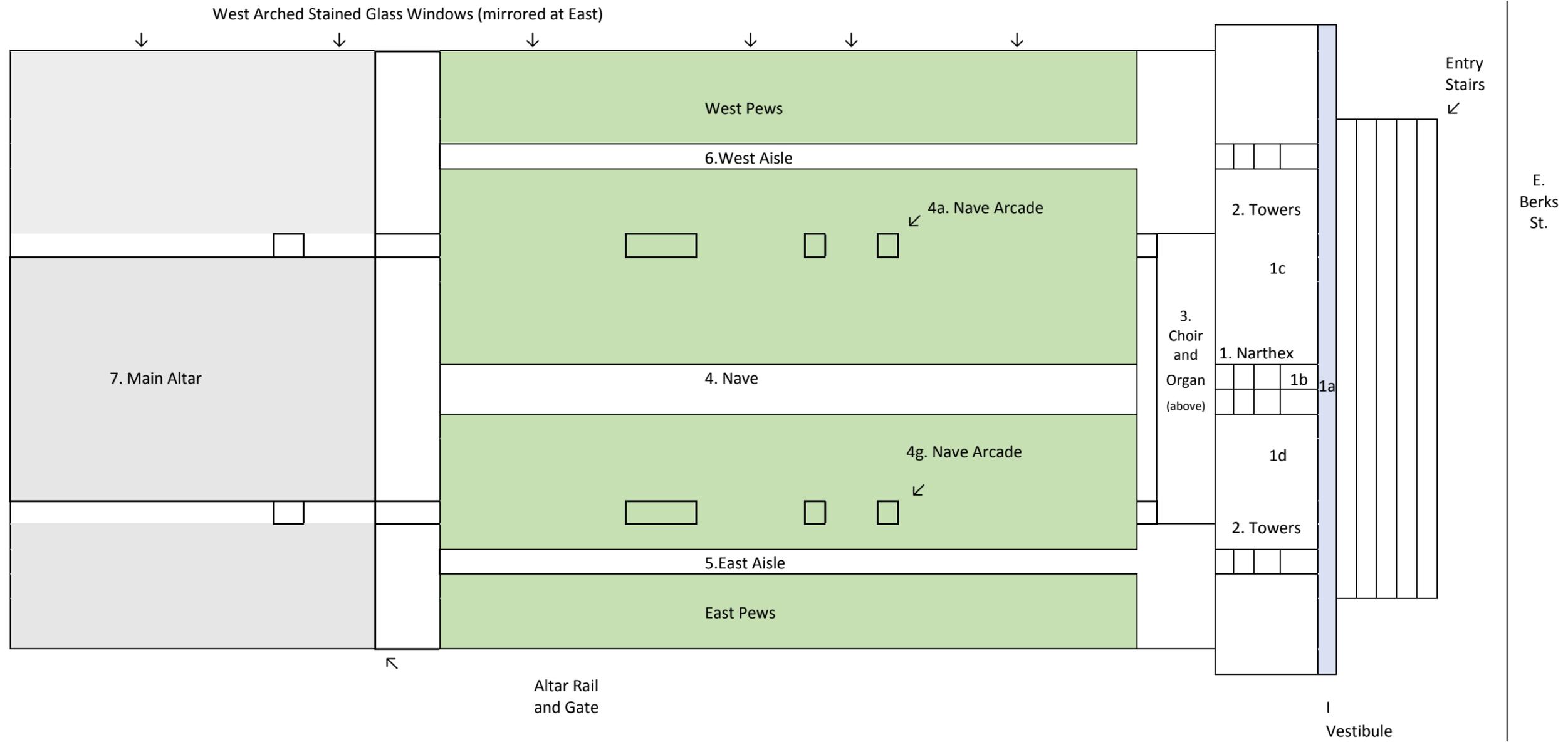
**12. PROPERTY OWNER**

Name: Archbishop Charles Chaput  
 Organization: Archdiocese of Philadelphia  
 Street Address: 222 N 17<sup>th</sup> Street  
 City, State, and Postal Code: Philadelphia, PA 19103

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Correct-Complete  Incorrect-Incomplete Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Notice Issuance: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Property Owner at Time of Notice  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Final Action: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Designated  Rejected

**5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**



## **5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

St. Laurentius Roman Catholic Church (St. Laurentius Church) is located at the southwest corner of E. Berks Street and Memphis Street in the Fishtown section of the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia. St. Laurentius Church stands on a campus of four buildings that is comprised of four tax parcels on the south side of E. Berks Street between Memphis and Tulip Streets, known as 1600-06, 1608-10, 1612, and 1616-18 E. Berks Street. On June 9, 2015, the Architectural Committee voted unanimously for designation of the church building that comprises St. Laurentius Church, which would include the building envelope and the physical features that comprises its historic integrity from the exterior. While the designation of the church building was proposed in the previous application, this nomination seeks to designate the public rooms of its interior.

The church building stands primarily on the tax parcel known as 1600-06 E. Berks Street, but a small extension of the church building projecting from the southwest corner of the main section of the church building extends across the tax parcel boundary onto the tax parcel known as 1608-10 E. Berks Street. The overall boundary of the proposed designation is as follows: Beginning at a point at the southwest corner of E. Berks Street and Memphis Street, containing in front or breadth on said E. Berks Street 70 feet more or less, and of that width extending southwardly between lines parallel at right angles with said E. Berks Street in length or depth 87.5 feet more or less, and extending westwardly between lines parallel with said E. Berks Street 17.5 feet more or less, and extending southwardly between lines parallel at right angles with said E. Berks Street 26.5 feet more or less to E. Wilt Street, and extending eastwardly along said E. Wilts Street 87.5 feet more or less to the northwest corner of E. Wilts Street and Memphis Street, and extending northwardly along said Memphis Street in length or depth 114 feet more or less to the point of origin; being know as 1600-06 E. Berks Street (OPA Account 777076000, Parcel Nos. 018N07-0099, 0078, and 0018) and part of 1608-10 E. Berks Street (OPA Account 181198100, Parcel Nos. 018N07-0076 and 0100).

## **6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Within the stonewalls of Saint Laurentius Roman Catholic Church (St. Laurentius Church) at 1600-06 (1608-10) East Berks Street, Fishtown, Philadelphia, the magnificent interior that comprises the sanctuary and other public areas of the said building is a cultural centerpiece and gem of the Polish community and the City of Philadelphia. The architectural bones of the Interior of St. Laurentius Church was designed by Edwin Forrest Durang to emulate a Transitional style interior, as articulated in ecclesiastical interiors of nineteenth century America. Later interior improvements greatly embellished the architectural details of the Transitional style, preserving these architectural features, but creating a shrine to Poland's elaborate Roman Catholic interiors through the aesthetic created in 1912.

The numbers within the map should be keyed with the following features of the subject interior of this nomination and include the following components, details, and features:

### **1. Narthex**

See general details under number eight.

1a. Exterior Doors with Stained Glass

1b. Interior Doors with Leaded Glass

### **2. Towers**

See general details under number eight.

East Tower

2a. Staircase

2b. Decorative Stained Glass Window (north)

2c. Decorative Stained Glass Window (east)

West Tower

2d. Staircase

2e. Decorative Stained Glass Window (north)

### **3. Choir Loft**

3a. Organ (within choir loft)

3b. Paneling

3c. Decorative Stained Glass Window (center)

3d. Decorative Stained Glass Window (east)

3e. Decorative Stained Glass Window (west)

3f. Arched Mural of the Communion of Saints (east)

3g. Arched Mural of Saint Cecelia (west)

### **4. Nave**

4a. Nave Arcade (east)

4b. Arched Mural of the Blessing of Saint Laurentius (first from south/altar)

4c. Arched Mural of the Crowning Mary Queen of Heaven (second from south/altar)

4d. Arched Mural of the Assumption of Mary (second from south/altar)

4e. Arched Mural of Baptism of Jesus (third from south/altar)

- 4f. Arched Mural of Jesus the Good Shepard (fifth from south/altar)
- 4g. Nave Arcade (west)
- 4h. Arched Mural of Regina Poloniae Matka Boska Blogoslawiaca (first from south/altar)
- 4i. Arched Mural of the Ascension of Jesus (second from south/altar)
- 4j. Arched Mural of Jesus Teaching in the Temple (third from south/altar)
- 4k. Arched Mural of the Death of St. Joseph (fourth from south/altar)
- 4l. Arched Mural of the Blessing of King Henry Pobożny (Pious) by St. Hedwig (fifth from south/altar)
- 4m. Light Fixtures (east)
- 4n. Light Fixtures (west)

## **5. Aisle (east)**

- 5a. Altar Fresco of Five Scenes of Cherubs (south end of the aisle)
- 5b. Stained Glass Window of Hearth of Jesus-Serca Jezusa (first from south)
- 5c. Stained Glass Window of Heart of Mary-Serca Maryi (second from south)
- 5d. Stained Glass Window of St. Adalbert-Sw. Wojciech (third from south)
- 5e. Stained Glass Window of St. Laurentius (fourth from south)
- 5f. Stained Glass Window of St. Catherine-Sw. Katarzyna (fifth from south)
- 5g. Stained Glass Window of St. Peter-Sw. Piotr (sixth from south)
- 5h. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (first from south)
- 5i. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (second from south)
- 5j. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (third from south)
- 5k. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (fourth from south)
- 5l. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (fifth from south)
- 5m. Plaques with Stations of the Cross (along eastern wall between windows)
- 5n. Arched Mural of Our Lady of Czestochowa (north end of the aisle)

## **6. Aisle (west)**

- 6a. Altar Fresco of Five Scenes of Cherubs (south end of the aisle)
- 6b. Stained Glass Window of Blessed Sacrament (first from south)
- 6c. Stained Glass Window of Saint Joseph, Sw. Jozef (second from south)
- 6d. Stained Glass Window of St. Hedwig-Sw. Jadwiga (third from south)
- 6e. Stained Glass Window of St. Stanislaus-Sw. Stanislaus (fourth from south)
- 6f. Stained Glass Window of St. Casimir-Sw. Kazimierz (fifth from south)
- 6g. Stained Glass Window of St. Paul-Sw. Pawel (sixth from south)
- 6h. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (first from south)
- 6i. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (second from south)
- 6j. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (third from south)
- 6k. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (fourth from south)
- 6l. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (fifth from south)
- 6m. Arched Mural of unknown religious scene (north end of the aisle)

## **7. Main Altar**

- 7a. Altar Rail and Gate
- 7b. Fresco of Cherubs (east)

- 7c. Fresco of Cherubs (west)
- 7d. Fresco of Angel (east)
- 7e. Fresco of Angel (west)
- 7f. Fresco of Angel (east)
- 7g. Fresco of Angel (west)
- 7h. Fresco of Jesus Christ (east)
- 7i. Fresco of the Holy Father, God Almighty (west)
- 7j. Fresco of Cherubs (east)
- 7k. Fresco of Cherubs (west)
- 7l. Fresco of Dove (center)
- 7m. Fresco of Holy Spirit (center)
- 7n. Arched Fresco of Gilt Detail (altar architrave)
- 7o. Painted Panel of Gilt Crosses (behind reredos and altar table)
- 7p. Arched Mural of Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (east)
- 7q. Arched Mural of Saint Rita of Cascai (west)

## **8. General Architectural Details and Features**

- 8a. Apertures (window openings)
- 8b. Apertures (doorways)
- 8c. Windows (windows)
- 8d. Doors
- 8e. Architraves (trim)
- 8f. Architraves (painted)
- 8g. Other Decorative Moldings (trim)
- 8h. Other Decorative Moldings (painted)
- 8i. Plaster Walls
- 8j. Ceilings
- 8k. Light Fixtures (original and all other light fixtures older than thirty years)

## **1. Narthex**

Upon entering St. Laurentius Church through the front doors within the Primary, north elevation, as well as through the side entrances, the east and west elevations, there are three sets of steps, leading respectively to the east and west aisles, and at center to the nave.

Aside from the other general details of the building and its finishes described later under Part 8 of this building description, the following physical elements are proposed to be under the jurisdiction of this designation:

1a. Exterior Wooden Doors with Stained Glass: five sets of double, wooden doors with stained glass inserts that all appear to be original to the building.

1b. Interior Wooden Doors with Leaded Glass: three sets of double wooden doors with stained and/or leaded glass inserts that all appear to be original to the building.

Note: The Narthex is essentially a vestibule. Its primary aesthetic elements are limited to the staircases and the statuary.

(c) 2014 Philadelphia  
Church Project



Crucifix and stairs (left). Mary with Jesus After Death (right). Photographs Courtesy John Wisniewski.

## **2. Towers**

Aside from the general details of the building and its finishes described later under number Part 8 of the physical description, the following physical elements are proposed to be under the jurisdiction of this designation:

### East Tower

2a. Stairs: Within the choir loft of the church is a period staircases that winds to the highest point of the tower meant for human activity. This staircase is period, but unadorned.

2b. Decorative Stained Glass Window (north) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an imitation architrave of a decorative gilt painted design. There is also a stone sill.

2c. Decorative Stained Glass Window (east) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an imitation architrave of a decorative gilt painted design. There is also a stone sill.

### West Tower

2a. Stairs: Within the choir loft of the church is a period staircases that winds to the highest point of the tower meant for human activity. This staircase is period, but unadorned.

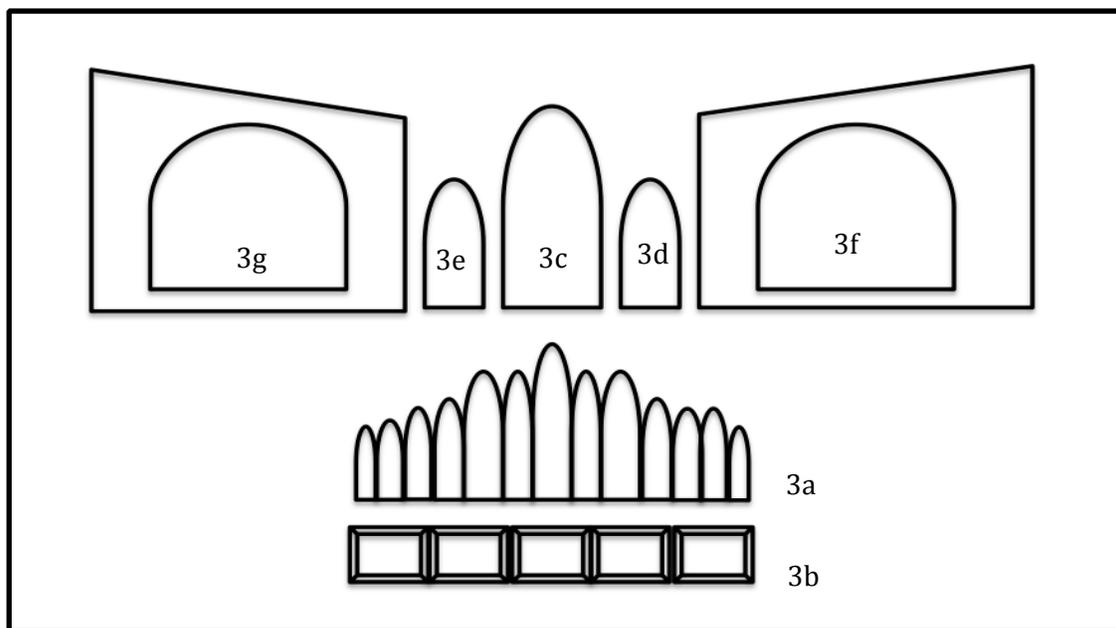
2c. Decorative Stained Glass Window (north) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an imitation architrave of a decorative gilt painted design. There is also a stone sill.

2d. Decorative Stained Glass Window (east) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an imitation architrave of a decorative gilt painted design. There is also a stone sill.

### 3. Choir Loft



Choir and Organ Section of the interior, as well as the entrance to the Narthex of the church. Courtesy John Wisniewski.



Simple diagram of Choir Loft. Courtesy the Friends of St. Laurentius

Aside from the other general details of the building and its finishes described later under Part 8 of this building description, the following physical elements are proposed to be under the jurisdiction of this designation:

3a. Organ: the organ is located above the narthex of the church beneath the three-part stained glass windows that are centered on the north elevation of the building. The organ itself was not accessible to the author of this application, but the pipes of the organ are visible from the Choir Loft through the whole of the nave of the building. Immediately to the south of the organ is the choir section, which includes seating, all of which is original.

3b. Wood Paneling: Beneath the organ pipes is decorative oak paneling that appears to have been installed at the time the organ was replaced and/or restored.

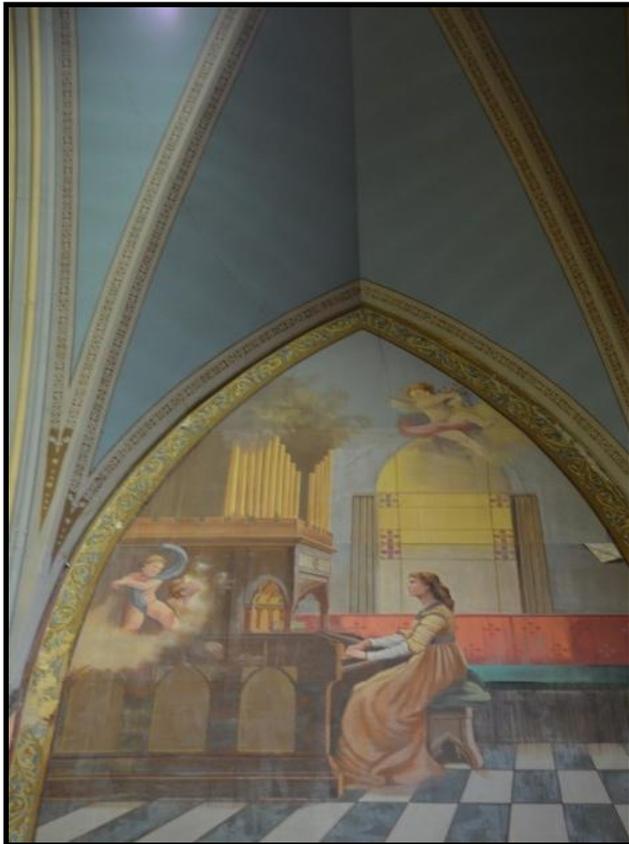
3c. Decorative Stained Glass Window (center) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an imitation architrave of a decorative gilt painted design. There is also a stone sill.

3d. Decorative Stained Glass Window (east) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an imitation architrave of a decorative gilt painted design. There is also a stone sill.

3e. Decorative Stained Glass Window (west) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an imitation architrave of a decorative gilt painted design. There is also a stone sill.



Arched Mural of the Communion of Saints. Courtesy the Friends of St. Laurentius.



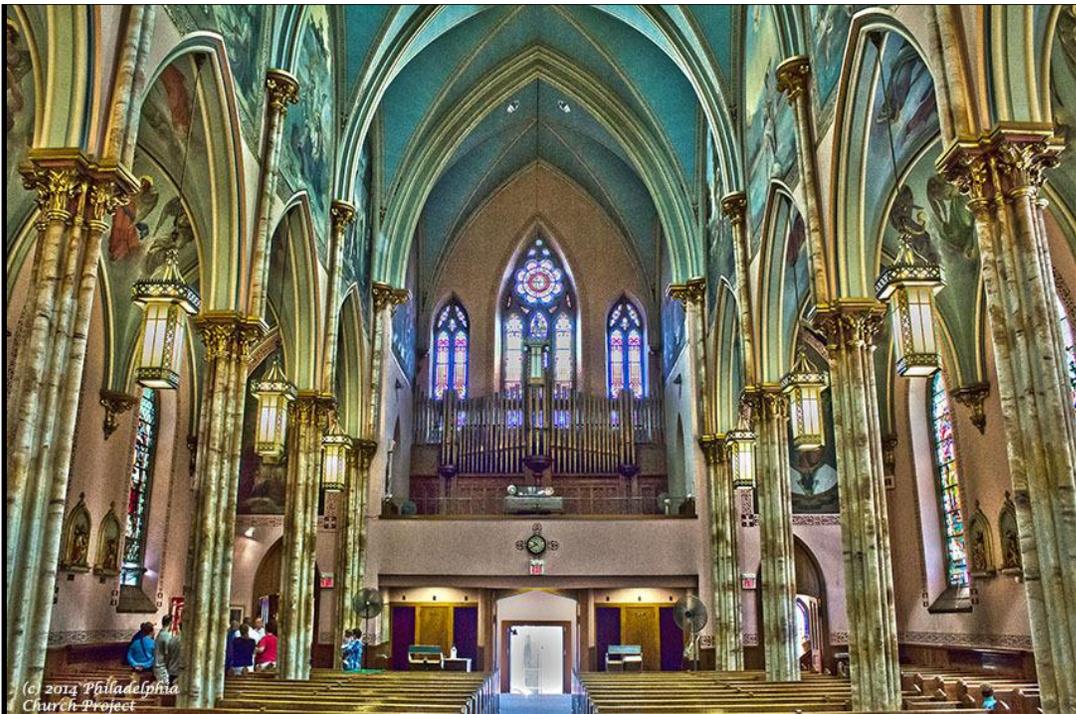
of St. Laurentius.

3f. Arched Mural of the Communion of Saints (east) – the arched painting (oil on canvas) at this location is the said religious scene of the Communion of Saints. The painting is further defined by a border of decorative stencil detail that articulated that is entirely gilt.

3g. Arched Mural of St. Cecilia (west) - the arched painting (oil on canvas) at this location is of St. Cecilia playing the keys of her musical instrument as is typically shown. The painting is further defined by a border of decorative stencil detail that articulated that is entirely gilt.

Arched Mural of St. Cecilia. Courtesy the Friends

#### 4. Nave



(c) 2013 Philadelphia Church Project  
The Nave of St. Laurentius. Photographs Courtesy the Philadelphia Church Project.

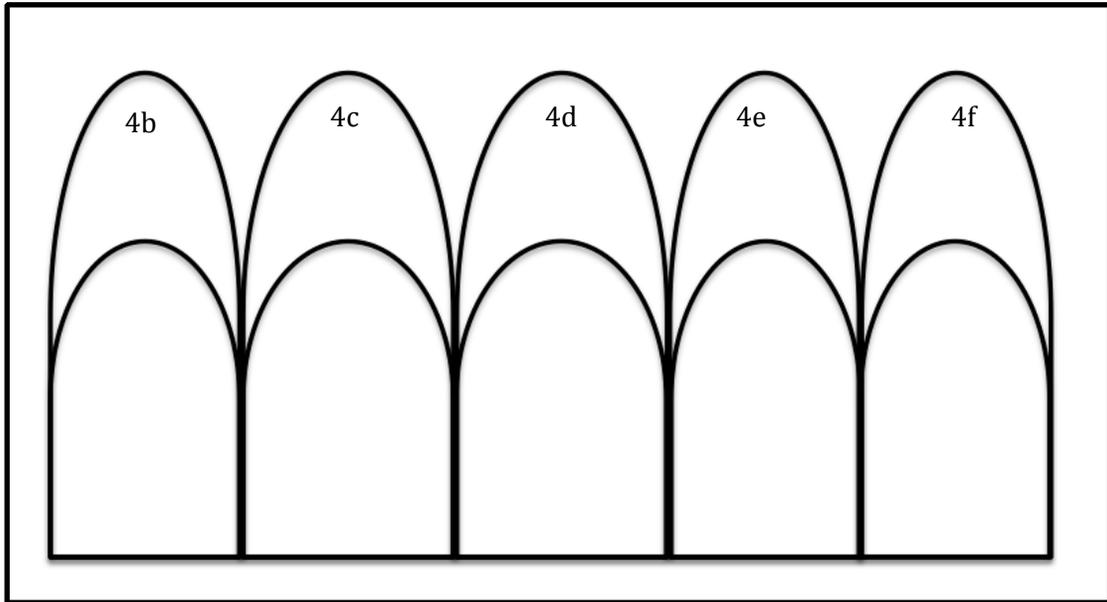
Because the Interior of St. Laurentius Church is of the Transitional style, its features, including complex vaulted ceilings and arcades, are prescribed to conform to that type of

design as repeated and recreated in the nineteenth century. The Nave is centered upon a complex vaulted ceiling that is created by three major components, including a series of (a) transverse ribs, (b) pier arches, and (c) diagonal ribs. Supporting the vaulted ceilings of the Nave and delineating that space from the East and West Aisles, is a series of pier arches that form the Nave Arcade at the east and west. In this case, the pointed archways rest on Early English style piers with joints comprised of shaft impost and capitals that are indicative of the Transitional style. Similar in style, a second, but less complex pier extends from the first stage of piers to meet the formation of the transverse ribs. The transverse rib is a repeated feature that comprises the vaulting, spanning the nave to its longitudinal axis and delineating its length into compartments. The diagonal ribs is the crossing bay or compartment of the vaulted ceiling. The Nave Arcades delineate the space from the adjoining East and West Aisles.



Looking north, through the Nave to the north elevation. Courtesy the Friends of St. Laurentius.

4a. Nave Arcade (east) – The Early English style piers are faux-painted to appear as marble. The transitional style capitals and shaft impostos are gilded.



Simple diagram of East Elevation of the Nave (not to scale). Courtesy the Friends of St. Laurentius.

4b. Arched Mural of the Blessing of St. Laurentius (first from south/Altar) - the arched painting (oil on canvas) at this location is the said religious scene. The painting is further defined by a border of decorative stencil detail that articulated that is entirely gilt.

4c. Arched Mural of the Crowning Mary Queen of Heaven (second from south/Altar) - the arched painting (oil on canvas) at this location is the said religious scene painted upon the plaster wall. The painting is further defined by a border of decorative stencil detail that articulated that is entirely gilt.

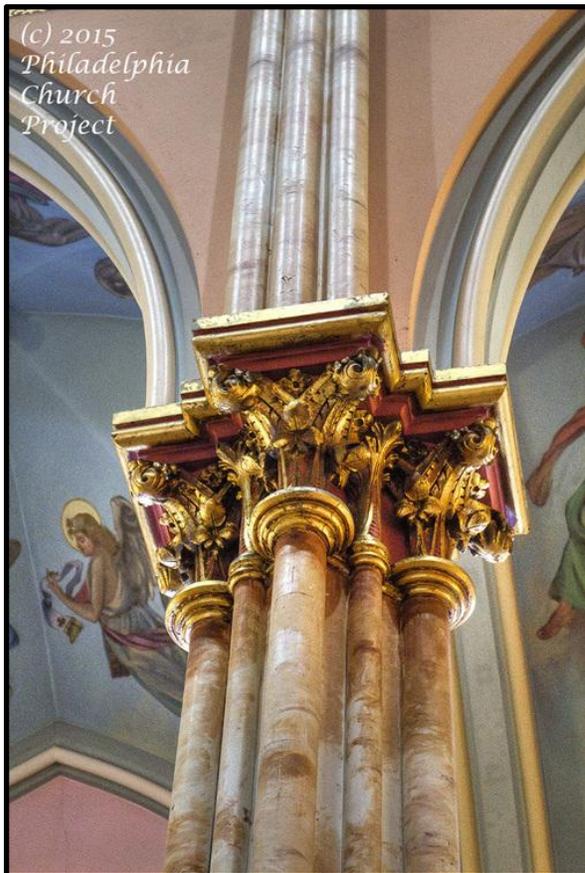
4d. Arched Mural of the Assumption of Mary (second from south/Altar) - the arched painting (oil on canvas) at this location is the said religious scene painted upon the plaster wall. The painting is further defined by a border of decorative stencil detail that articulated that is entirely gilt.

4e. Arched Mural of Baptism of Jesus (third from south/Altar) - the arched painting (oil on canvas) at this location is the said religious scene painted upon the plaster wall. The painting is further defined by a border of decorative stencil detail that articulated that is entirely gilt.

4f. Arched Mural of Jesus the Good Shepard (fifth from south/Altar) - the arched painting (oil on canvas) at this location is the said religious scene painted upon the plaster wall. The painting is further defined by a border of decorative stencil detail that articulated that is entirely gilt.

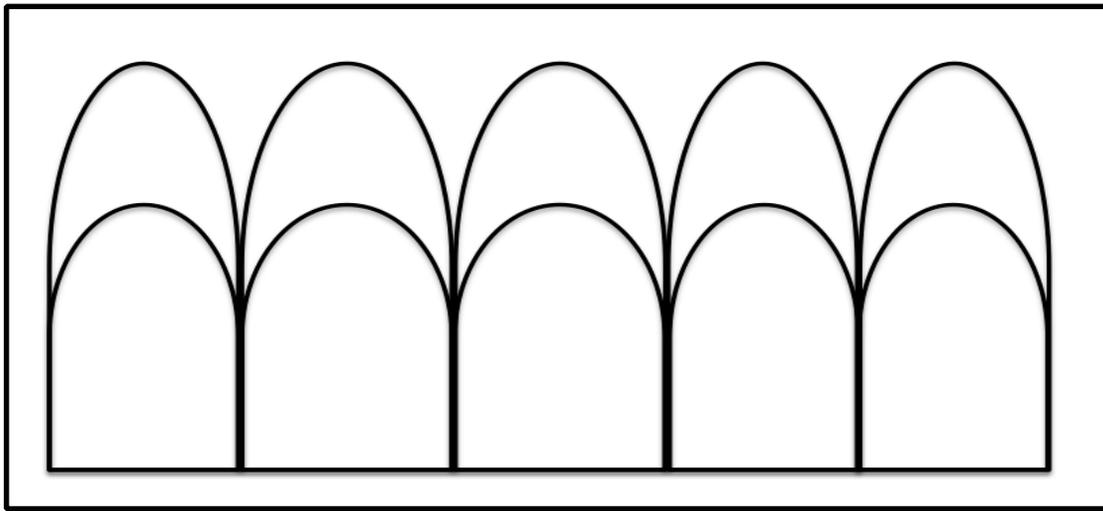


Looking east, Arched Mural of Jesus the Good Shepard (left). Looking west, the following arched paintings: the Blessing of St. Laurentius (first from south/altar); Crowning Mary Queen of Heaven (second from south/altar); the Assumption of Mary (second from south/altar); and the Baptism of Jesus (third from south/altar). Photographs Courtesy John Wisniewski.



Looking west, details of a column and arch. Courtesy the Philadelphia Church Project.

4h. Nave Arcade (west) - the Early English style piers are faux-painted to appear as marble. The Transitional style piers and shaft impostes are gilded.



Simple diagram of West Elevation of the Nave (not to scale). Courtesy the Friends of St. Laurentius.

4i. Arched Mural of St. Rita of Cascia (first from south/altar) - the arched painting (oil on canvas) at this location is the said religious scene. The painting is further defined by a border of decorative stencil detail that articulated that is entirely gilt.

4j. Arched Mural of Regina Poloniae Matka Boska Blogoslawiaca (first from south/altar) - the arched painting (oil on canvas) at this location is the said religious scene. The painting is further defined by a border of decorative stencil detail that articulated that is entirely gilt.

4k. Arched Mural of the Ascension of Jesus (second from south/altar) - the arched painting (oil on canvas) at this location is the said religious scene. The painting is further defined by a border of decorative stencil detail that articulated that is entirely gilt.

4l. Arched Mural of Jesus Teaching in the Temple (third from south/altar) - the arched painting (oil on canvas) at this location is the said religious scene. The painting is further defined by a border of decorative stencil detail that articulated that is entirely gilt.

4m. Arched Mural of the Death of St. Joseph (fourth from south/altar) - the arched painting (oil on canvas) at this location is the said religious scene. The painting is further defined by a border of decorative stencil detail that articulated that is entirely gilt.

4n. Arched Mural of the Blessing of King Henry Pobożny (Pious) by St. Hedwig (fifth from south/Altar) - the arched painting (oil on canvas) at this location is the said religious scene. The painting is further defined by a border of decorative stencil detail that articulated that is entirely gilt.



(c) 2014 Philadelphia Church Project  
West and ceiling elevation of the Nave, including the following Murals: Regina Poloniae Matka Boska Błogosławiąca; Ascension of Jesus (second from south/altar), Jesus Teaching in the Temple (third from south/altar), the Death of St. Joseph (fourth from south/altar), the Blessing of King Henry Pobożny (Pious) by St. Hedwig (fifth from south/altar). Courtesy the Philadelphia Church Project.



4o. Light Fixtures (east) – Dating to the first quarter of the twentieth century, the light fixtures were likely installed when the building was electrified. Pending from the center of the five arches of the nave at the east elevation, between it and the east aisle, the fixtures are heavy bronze lanterns with opaque glass at each side. There are five original fixtures on this side of the church.

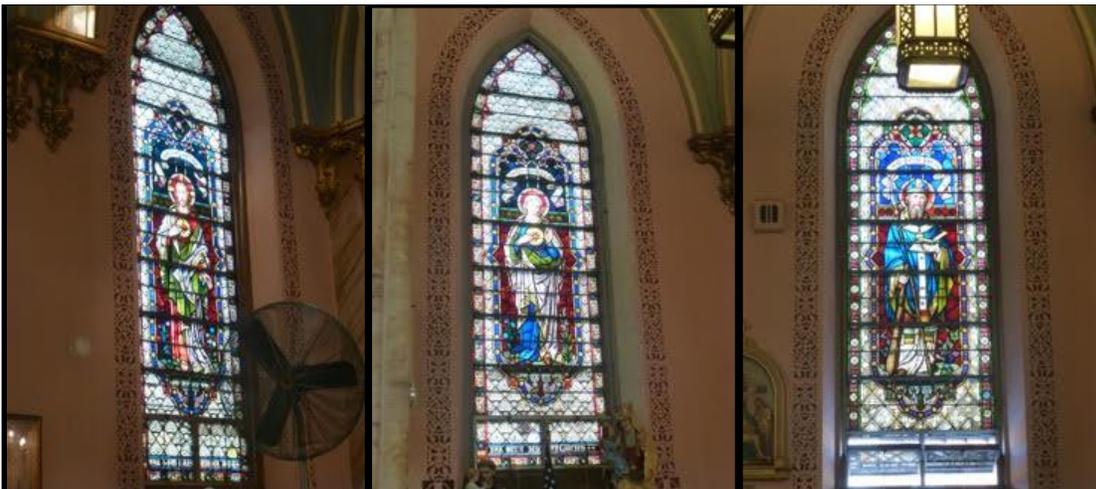
4p. Light Fixtures (west) - Dating to the first quarter of the twentieth century, the light fixtures were likely installed when the building was electrified. Pending from the center of the five arches of the nave at the west elevation, between it and the west aisle, the fixtures are heavy bronze lanterns with opaque glass at each side. There are five original fixtures on this side of the church.

5. Aisle (east)



Looking southeast, the East Aisle and Altar (left). Courtesy the Friends of St. Laurentius. Looking south, the East Altar (right). Courtesy the Philadelphia Church Project.

5a. Altar Fresco of Five Scenes of Cherubs (south end of the aisle) - the arched fresco includes a background of color and five scenes of cherubs. The arched fresco is further defined by a border of gilt decorative stencil detail.



Looking east, lining the East Aisle are the stained glass windows shown above: the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Sacred Heart of Mary, and St. Adalbert. Courtesy John Wisniewski.

5b. Stained Glass Window of Heart of Jesus-Serca Jezusa (first from south) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an architrave of a decorative gilt painted design, beneath which is a simple stone sill.

5c. Stained Glass Window of Heart of Mary-Serca Maryi (second from south) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an architrave of a decorative gilt painted design, beneath which is a simple stone sill.

5d. Stained Glass Window of St. Adalbert-Sw. Wojciech (third from south) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an architrave of a decorative gilt painted design, beneath which is a simple stone sill.

5e. Stained Glass Window of St. Laurentius (fourth from south) - the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an architrave of a decorative gilt painted design, beneath which is a simple stone sill.

5f. Stained Glass Window of St. Catherine-Sw. Katrazyna (fourth from south) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an architrave of a decorative gilt painted design, beneath which is a simple stone sill.

5g. Stained Glass Window of St. Peter-Sw. Piotr (fifth from south) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an architrave of a decorative gilt painted design, beneath which is a simple stone sill.



Looking southeast, the East Aisle, beneath the above-stained glass window are three statues: St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Anthony, and St. Anne. Courtesy John Wisniewski.



Looking south, within the East Aisle, frescos of angles. Courtesy the Philadelphia Church Project.

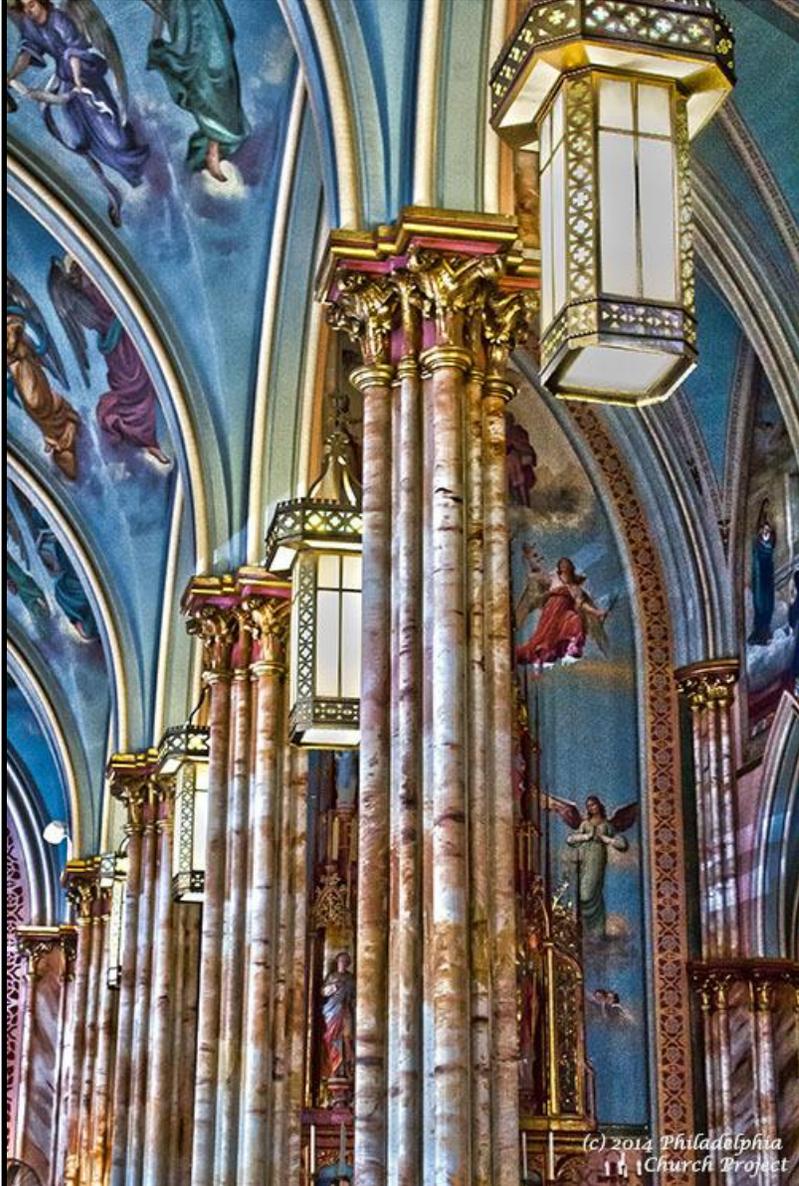
5h. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (first from south) – articulated in the form of paint upon plaster, the fresco portrays a group of elaborately dressed angels, each within their own panel of the carefully vaulted ceiling.

5i. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (second from south) - articulated in the form of paint upon plaster, the fresco portrays a group of elaborately dressed angels, each within their own panel of the carefully vaulted ceiling.

5j. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (third from south) - articulated in the form of paint upon plaster, the fresco portrays a group of elaborately dressed angels, each within their own panel of the carefully vaulted ceiling.

5k. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (fourth from south) - articulated in the form of paint upon plaster, the fresco portrays a group of elaborately dressed angels, each within their own panel of the carefully vaulted ceiling.

5l. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (fifth from south) - articulated in the form of paint upon plaster, the fresco portrays a group of elaborately dressed angels, each within their own panel of the carefully vaulted ceiling.



Looking south, Architectural Arches and Columns delineating the Nave and the East Aisle. Courtesy the Philadelphia Church Project.

5m. Plaques with Stations of the Cross (along eastern wall between windows) – several plaster plaques are staged along the eastern wall of the east aisle, depicting scenes representing the Stations of the Cross.



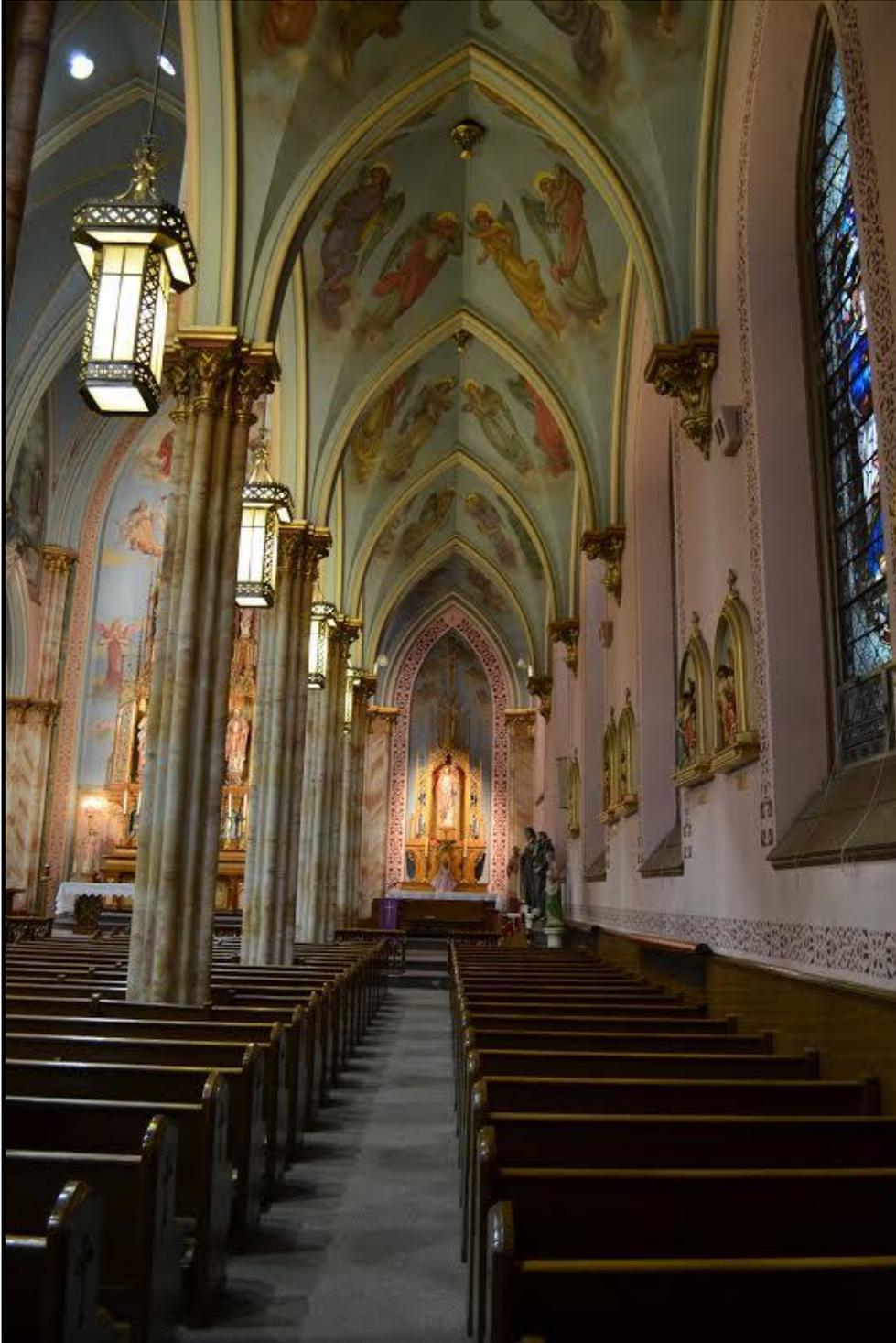
Looking north, Arched Mural of Our Lady of Czestochowa (north end of the aisle). Courtesy the Philadelphia Church Project.

5n. Arched Mural of Our Lady of Czestochowa (north end of the aisle) - the arched painting (oil on canvas) at this location is the said religious scene. The painting is further defined by a border of decorative stencil detail that articulated that is entirely gilt.



Looking south, the Ceiling Frescos of Angels within the East Aisle. Courtesy the Philadelphia Church Project.

6. Aisle (west)



Looking north, the West Aisle, showing Stations of the Cross, the pews, and the West Altar. Courtesy the Friends of St. Laurentius.



Looking north, the West Altar. Courtesy the Philadelphia Church Project.

6a. Altar Fresco of Five Scenes of Cherubs (south end of the aisle) the arched fresco includes a background of color and five scenes of cherubs, which is further defined by a border of gilt decorative stencil detail.



Looking west, interior views of the stained glass windows within the West Aisle: Saint Joseph, Sw. Jozef, St. Hedwig-Sw. Jadwiga, and the Blessed Sacrament (smaller window). Courtesy John Wisniewski.

6b. Stained Glass Window of the Blessed Sacrament (small stained glass window above the Sacristy, first from south) - the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an architrave of a decorative gilt painted design, beneath which is a simple stone sill.

6c. Stained Glass Window of Saint Joseph, Sw. Jozef (second from south) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an architrave of a decorative gilt painted design, beneath which is a simple stone sill.

6d. Stained Glass Window of St. Hedwig-Sw. Jadwiga (second from south) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an architrave of a decorative gilt painted design, beneath which is a simple stone sill.

6e. Stained Glass Window of St. Stanislaus-Sw. Stanislaus (third from south) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an architrave of a decorative gilt painted design, beneath which is a stone sill.

6f. Stained Glass Window of St. Casimir-Sw. Kazimierz (fourth from south) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an architrave of a decorative gilt painted design, beneath which is a simple stone sill.

6g. Stained Glass Window of St. Paul-Sw. Pawel (fifth from south) – the arched multi-light stained glass window is defined by an architrave of a decorative gilt painted design, beneath which is a simple stone sill.



Looking north, the ceiling, etc. of the West Aisle (left). Looking west, a single Plaque of the Stations of the Cross: Simon Helps Jesus (right). Courtesy the Friends of St. Laurentius.

6h. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (first from south) - articulated in the form of paint upon plaster, the fresco portrays a group of elaborately dressed angels, each within their own panel of the carefully vaulted ceiling.

6i. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (second from south) - articulated in the form of paint upon plaster, the fresco portrays a group of elaborately dressed angels, each within their own panel of the carefully vaulted ceiling.

6j. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (third from south) - articulated in the form of paint upon plaster, the fresco portrays a group of elaborately dressed angels, each within their own panel of the carefully vaulted ceiling.

6k. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (fourth from south) - articulated in the form of paint upon plaster, the fresco portrays a group of elaborately dressed angels, each within their own panel of the carefully vaulted ceiling.

6l. Ceiling Fresco of Angels (fifth from south) - articulated in the form of paint upon plaster, the fresco portrays a group of elaborately dressed angels, each within their own panel of the carefully vaulted ceiling.

6m. Plaques with Stations of the Cross (along western wall between windows)

6n. Arched Mural of unknown religious depiction (north end of the aisle) – the arched painting is of an unknown religious scene.

## 7. Main Altar



Looking south, the Main Altar. Courtesy the Philadelphia Church Project.

7a. Balustrade and gate (east to west between the nave and the main altar) - separating the main altar at the south from the nave at the north, a fully articulated mahogany balustrade

and gate are articulated in the Gothic Revival style. The balustrade and gate appear to be original and/or an early specimen of the interior details.



Looking north, the second stage of the Reredos, featuring the following statues: St. Casimir; the Blessed Virgin and Child, and St. Adalbert. Courtesy the Philadelphia Church Project.



Looking north, the third stage of the reredos within the Main Altar. Courtesy the Philadelphia Church Project.



(c) 2014 Philadelphia Church Project  
Looking north, details of the Alter Table and Reredos. Courtesy the Philadelphia Church Project.



Looking north, details of the Frescos and Reredos. Courtesy the Philadelphia Church Project.

7b. Fresco of Cherubs (east) - the fresco at this location is the said religious scene painted upon the plaster wall.

7c. Fresco of Cherubs (west) - the fresco at this location is the said religious scene painted upon the plaster wall.

7d. Fresco of Angel (east) - the fresco at this location is the said religious scene painted upon the plaster wall.

7e. Fresco of Angel (west) - the fresco at this location is the said religious scene painted upon the plaster wall.



Looking south, the Frescos behind the Altar and the Gothic-spire element of the Reredos. Courtesy the Philadelphia Church Project.

7f. Fresco of Angel (east) - the fresco at this location is the said religious scene painted upon the plaster wall.

7g. Fresco of Angel (west) - the fresco at this location is the said religious scene painted upon the plaster wall.

7h. Fresco of Jesus Christ (east) - the fresco at this location is the said religious scene painted upon the plaster wall.

7i. Fresco of the Holy Father, God Almighty (west) - the fresco at this location is the said religious scene painted upon the plaster wall.

7j. Fresco of Cherubs (east) the fresco includes a background of color and scenes of cherubs. The arched fresco is further defined by a border of gilt decorative stencil detail.

7k. Fresco of Cherubs (west) - the fresco includes a background of color and scenes of cherubs. The arched fresco is further defined by a border of gilt decorative stencil detail.

7l. Fresco of Dove (center) - the fresco includes a background of color and a single dove at center. The arched fresco is further defined by a border of gilt decorative stencil detail.

7m. Fresco of Holy Spirit (center) – the fresco includes background of color and a single image of the holy spirit.

7n. Arched Fresco of Gilt Detail (altar architrave) – the architrave is define by gilt paint.

7o. Painted Panel of Gilt Crosses (behind reredos) - the painting includes a background of color and group of vibrant crosses staged symmetrically.



Looking south, oak Altar furniture with carved detail, decorated in traditional gesso (left). Looking south (upward), the Reredos and its statuary, including all three stages. Courtesy the Philadelphia Church Project.

7p. Arched Painting of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary (east) - the arched painting (oil on canvas) at this location is the said religious scene. The painting is further defined by a border of decorative stencil detail that is articulated entirely of gilt.

7q. Arched Mural of Saint Rita of Cascia (west) - the arched painting at this location is the said religious scene. The painting is further defined by a border of decorative stencil detail that articulated that is entirely gilt.

## **8. General Architectural Details and Features**

8a. Apertures (window openings) – All apertures containing windows within the above-referenced space shall be under the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

8b. Apertures (doorways) – All apertures containing doors within the above-referenced space shall be under the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

8c. Windows – All windows and the materials that comprise said windows within the above-referenced space shall be under the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

8d. Doors – All doors within the described apertures within the above-referenced space shall be under the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

8e. Architraves (trim) – All trim regardless of material within the above-referenced space shall be under the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

8f. Architraves (painted) – All decoration of architraves within the above-referenced space shall be under the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

8g. Other Decorative Moldings (trim) – All Decorative Moldings within the above-referenced space shall be under the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

8h. Other Decorative Moldings (painted) – All Decorative Finishes of Moldings within the above-referenced space shall be under the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

8i. Plaster Walls– All painted and unpainted plaster wall surfaces within the above-referenced space should be subject to the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

8j. Ceilings – All painted and unpainted plaster ceiling surfaces within the above-referenced space should be subject to the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

8k. Light Fixtures (original and all other light fixtures older than thirty years) – All light fixtures that are greater than thirty years of age within the above-referenced space should be subject to the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

## 7. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Laurentius Church a significant historic site that merits designation by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. Located on E. Berks Street in the Fishtown neighborhood of the larger Kensington District of Philadelphia, St. Laurentius Church satisfies Criteria for Designation A, C, E, H, and J, as enumerated in Section 14-1004 of the Philadelphia Code. St. Laurentius Church:

- (a) Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, or nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;
- (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- (e) Is the work of designer, architect, landscape architect, or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation, Period of Significance: 1905-06;
- (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or City; and
- (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.



St. Laurentius Church Interior, Nineteenth Century.  
Courtesy the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

**Criteria (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style.**

**Designed by an Architect**

The Interior of St. Laurentius and its original, core architectural features reflects the environment characterized by revivalist architecture as interpreted and articulated in the design of American houses of worship in the late nineteenth century in Philadelphia. The Interior of St. Laurentius Church exemplifies the Transitional style of architecture, which derives from a period of transition in architectural style between the Romanesque and the Gothic styles in the twelfth century, which was completed by 1890. The Interior of St. Laurentius Church reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style in the use of traditional Polish motifs in the memorialization of that culture in the early twentieth century, as the congregation commissioned improvements to the interior that led to its substantive embellishment. The improvements achieved an aesthetic that memorialized and paid homage to the congregation's Polish roots. Furthermore, the Interior was designed by Edward Forrest Durang, a master architect of ecclesiastical buildings in nineteenth century Philadelphia.

**St. Laurentius Roman Catholic Church—the Building at 1602 E. Berks Street**

First worshiping in temporary quarters, as referenced above, the congregation of St. Laurentius Church eventually acquired a lot at the corner of Memphis and Vienna Streets (now E. Berks Street), which was deeded from Charles Schmitt to the Most Archbishop Ryan “for the Roman Catholic Congregation of St. Laurentius” for \$13,500 on December 24, 1885. Soon after this purchase, in 1886, the Father Kattein led the movement for the construction of a basement structure that would serve the church as their house of worship for roughly three years. After Father Kattein was called to another parish, the congregation welcomed Father Malusecki and under his leadership the superstructure of the present church edifice was completed.

Likely prior to the time that the basement was constructed, the eminent ecclesiastical architect, Edward Forrest Durang, was hired to draw-up the plans for a house of worship that would become St. Laurentius Church. While the basement was completed and in use by the close of 1886, the superstructure was constructed between 1886 and 1890, when in September of that year local newspapers reported that construction was complete.

The new building thus completed and set aside for the service of God is 60 feet wide by 122 feet long, with a height from the floor of the church to the vaulted ceiling of 60 feet. The walls are of stone, and over the front rise two spires, each which ascends to a height of 150 feet from the sidewalk. The adornments of the temple are handsome, rich and tasteful.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “St. Laurentius, 1882,” *Historical Sketches of the Catholic Churches and Institutions of Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: 1895, p. 138.

Designed by Durang, St. Laurentius was constructed by William J. McShane, Contractor and Builder, of 2204 Arch Street, and the plasterwork was completed by Thomas Kane, Plaster, of 3825 Fairmont Avenue. The contractor and the plaster regularly worked on projects that involved a Durang design.

The brownstone church and rectories were all completed by 1895. The original basement worship space was converted to a parochial school. The cost of the entire project was estimated at roughly \$75,000 by the Diocese of Philadelphia.

### **The Establishment and Evolution of St. Laurentius' Interior Aesthetic**

The Interior of St. Laurentius Church is one that has evolved over time to its current aesthetic achievement and magnificence. When the building was completed in 1890, the aesthetic quality of the interior reflected the work of its architect, Edwin Forrest Durang, a master in ecclesiastical, Roman Catholic design in nineteenth century Philadelphia. The design called for architectural details and features that combined elements of the Romanesque and the Gothic periods of architectural stylistic origin—a combination that created a Transitional style interior reflective of the twelfth century motifs. Romanesque architecture emerged in Western Europe in the first part of the eleventh century, characterized by massive articulated wall structures, round arches, and powerful vaults. Gothic architecture began in the late twelfth century and dominated architectural style through the Middle Ages in Western Europe, characterized by the pointed arch, the rib vault, and buttresses on the exterior. The Interior of St. Laurentius is of the Transitional style, featuring elements of Romanesque and Gothic architecture. With vaulted ceilings of the Romanesque and pointed arches of the Gothic, the marriage and profusion of styles even includes a detail specific to its period of origin in its use of Transitional style capitols in the Nave Arcade. The careful execution of its interior details were masterfully executed.

Much of Durang's design was articulated through extensive and impressive interior plaster work and decoration. This work was completed by Thomas Kane, Plasterer, 3825 Fairmont Avenue, Philadelphia. Kane appears to have been an important plasterer of the period in Philadelphia. His other works include: The Church of the Nativity; St. Francis Church; Church of Our Lady of Mercy; St. Michael's Church; the Beneficial Savings Fund Building; the Chapel of the Chestnut Hill Convent; St. Agnes Hospital; the Roman Catholic High School; St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church (Atlantic City); St. John's Roman Catholic Church (Pittston); Villa Maria Chapel (West Chester); St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church (Chester); the buildings at Glen Riddle for the Sisters of St. Francis; and the Merion Convent. Kane's work included both decorative and standard plaster; although, these larger projects likely included aesthetic designs.<sup>2</sup>

Furniture of a church, including that of its Altars, etc., is an important element of the execution of its intended architectural effect. Durang's design called for Gothic-spire furniture, including an elaborate Reredos for the Main Altar, as well as smaller, unique

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<sup>2</sup> E.F. Durang's Architectural Album. Athenaeum.

versions that created the Altars within the East and West Aisles. According to church histories and parishioners, the furniture was design specifically for St. Laurentius Church and imported from Munich, Germany.

The original design also included most of the current stained glass windows; however, the motif of the windows was likely a design and selection process largely led by Father Aadalbert Maluseucki, the congregation's first Polish priest. While donors usually provide stained glass windows in protestant churches, the selection is usually made by program by the priest in the Roman Catholic Church. During the design phase of St. Laurentius Church, Father Maluseucki ordered twelve windows nave windows from the van Treeck studio. The windows included individual depictions of Roman Catholic Saints to be articulated in stained glass. True to his heritage, Father Maluseucki selected Polish Saints Stanislaus, Casimir, Adalbert, and Hedwig, as well as St. Laurentius, to individually grace five respective windows. These windows were all commissioned in 1890 from the Gustav van Treeck Studio, with Gustav van Treeck as the principal artist.

Educated in Nuremburg by Johann George Kellner, the reknown glass maker and artist, Gustav van Treeck (1834-1930) founded his studio in 1887 in Munich, Germany. Between 1887 and 1903, the studio achieved much success, having mastered the art of stain glass and mosaic art glass. In 1903, van Treeck's ecclesiastical works led to an appointment as "Bayerischen Hofglasmalerei" (Royal Bavarian Studios for Glass Painting). In 1910, the first implemented mosaics into its works. By 1925, the studio was taken over by van Treeck's three sons—Carl, Gustav, and Konrad "Kurt" van Treeck. Branch offices were founded in Breslau and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In 1953, the studio achieved eminence in creating the first colored concrete glazings. After being passed down to the third generation of the van Treeck family, the studio established a "conservation and restoration" element in 1974. Management of the studio went into private hands in 2015, striving for both perfection in traditional design and restoration, as well as innovation in the field of art glass.<sup>3</sup>

In 1912, St. Laurentius Church underwent substantial improvements, which were achieved under the leadership of Rev. Gabriel Krause, then the congregation's priest. Building upon the original architectural features of the interior, the improvements included an elaborate aesthetic treatment, which was commissioned to marry the original design to historic designs related to important ecclesiastical interiors of Poland. An aggressive mural program was part of the improvements. Including at least twelve murals, the paintings were based on traditional Catholic depictions such as the "Life of Christ," etc., but also included themes related to the congregation's Polish origins. Executed by artist Lorenzo Scattaglia, one such Polish-inspired mural was of "Regina Poloniae," which emulates the famous, earlier version in Krakow by Jan Styka.<sup>4</sup> The dedication of the murals took place in December 1912. Aside from these major aesthetic

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.hofglasmalerei.de/en/about-us>

<sup>4</sup> St. Laurentius Parish, Philadelphia, Pa. Diamond Jubilee, St. Laurentius Parish. Listopad, 1957.

improvements, St. Laurentius Church also underwent technological advances with the upgrade from gas to electric lights that same year.<sup>5</sup>

In 1919, the church purchased and installed the Hall Pipe Organ, which was then installed and decorated to conform to the 1912 improvements. In 1957, St. Laurentius Church went additional renovation adding some incompatible modern features, but largely staying clear of major changes to the overall aesthetic of the building.<sup>6</sup>

After this time, most “improvements” were limited to mechanical systems and general maintenance to the building. In recent years unsympathetic carpeting was installed in some parts of the interior. However, the original flooring material is beneath this floor covering.

### **Summary of the Stylistic and Visual Significance of the Interior of St. Laurentius Church**

The Interior of St. Laurentius and its original, core architectural features reflects the environment characterized by revivalist architecture as interpreted and articulated in the design of American houses of worship in the late nineteenth century in Philadelphia. The Interior of St. Laurentius Church exemplifies the Transitional style of architecture, which derives from a period of transition in architectural style between the Romanesque and the Gothic styles in the twelfth century, which was completed by 1890. The Interior of St. Laurentius Church reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style in the use of traditional Polish motifs in the memorialization of that culture in the early twentieth century, as the congregation commissioned improvements to the interior that led to its substantive embellishment. The improvements achieved an aesthetic that memorialized and paid homage to the congregation’s Polish roots. Furthermore, the Interior was designed by Edward Forrest Durang, a master architect of ecclesiastical buildings in nineteenth century Philadelphia. In addition, the stained glass windows in the church were designed by the Gustav van Treeck Studio, one of the most eminent makers of stained glass in Germany and to-date one of the oldest continually operating of such companies.

**Criteria A: Has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, or nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past;**

**Criteria H: Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community, or City; and**

**Criteria J: Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.**

The Interior of St. Laurentius Church on E. Berks Street has significant character, interest, or value as part of the cultural characteristics of the City of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Owing to its location in the section of Kensington known as Fishtown, the remarkable Interior of St. Laurentius Church is an established

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<sup>5</sup> “Saint Laurentius Church History,” Polish American News. October-November 2007, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> St. Laurentius Parish, Philadelphia, Pa. Diamond Jubilee, St. Laurentius Parish. Listopad, 1957.

and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood and the larger Polish-American community of Philadelphia. Furthermore, the Interior of St. Laurentius Church is a symbol of the cultural, economic, social and historical heritage of the Polish-immigrant and Polish-American population of the City of Philadelphia from the time of its conception to-date, standing as a historic touchstone between the old country—Poland, and a new life and cultural development in America.

### **Polish Migration to America**

Poland, as we know it today, was subdivided and annexed by three superpowers in 1795—Prussia, Russia, and Austria. The sovereign nation would not be fully unified again until 1919. Because of Poland was divided by its reorganization under the jurisdiction of three foreign countries, each section of Poland developed in its own way, influencing which Poles emigrated, including their period of departure and what became of them after their arrival in the United States.<sup>7</sup> In general, Polish emigration progressed from West to East, from German Poland to Galacia and the Russian provinces. Attempts to overthrow the foreign government in 1831, 1846, and 1863 had been unsuccessful, increasing the persecution of the population.<sup>8</sup> The Prussian May Law was passed in 1870, which prohibited the use of the Polish language in schools and churches, which was nearly a final blow to the population. All of these factors, as well as economic disparity, coupled with the “hope” of achieving the American dream led to a large migration of Polish immigrants to the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>9</sup>

The German sections of Poland—Pozan (Posen), Silesia, West Prussia, and East Prussia—represent the first groups of Polish immigrants to migrate to America. Upon arriving in America, the Polish population most often settled in major cities, forming communities that established churches and civic organizations to support their culture and practice customs brought with them from the old country. Immigration to America began as early as 1854, when the parishes of “Panna Marya” and “Czestochowa” were established as a result of Polish migration to Texas. In Wisconsin, the Polish immigrants founded their “Polonia” parish in 1855. Increasing in number, Polish immigrants arrived in Michigan by 1857, Milwaukee in 1862, Mississippi in 1864, Chicago in 1864, and Buffalo and New York City in 1872. In all of these places, the Polish population founded close-knit communities.<sup>10</sup>

According to Carol Ann Golab, the years of 1870 to 1920 were important in the formation of modern urban America. These decades witnessed two important events—the rise of preeminence of large cities as the industrial centers of the nation and the massive influx to the cities of especially foreign-born populations. Cities such as Chicago, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Minneapolis Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and New York were creating and growing new industries and ideas. Cities attracted new people, which from 1870 to 1920 included a ratio of one-half immigrants and their children. These

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<sup>7</sup> Golab, Carol Ann. *The Polish Communities of Philadelphia, 1870-1920: Immigrant Distribution and Adaptation in Urban America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1971.

<sup>8</sup> 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet. St. Laurentius Church. Philadelphia: 1982.

<sup>9</sup> Golab, Carol Ann. *The Polish Communities of Philadelphia, 1870-1920: Immigrant Distribution and Adaptation in Urban America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1971

<sup>10</sup> 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet. St. Laurentius Church. Philadelphia: 1982.

immigrants left a permanent imprint on the American urban environment. While not all of the immigrants of this period settled in major cities, most of them did.<sup>11</sup>

### **Polish Migration to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

Eventually, Polish immigrants settled in Pennsylvania, establishing parishes: Shamokin in 1870, Shenandoah in 1872, Nanticoke and Pittsburgh in 1875, Mt. Carmel in 1877, and Philadelphia in 1882. The first Polish organization founded in Philadelphia was Związek Narodowy Polski, (Polish National Alliance), which was organized under the leadership of Julius Andrzejko on February 14, 1880. A society like the Polish National Alliance gave members the opportunity to discuss their mutual religious and social problems. Polish Catholics attended churches and joined pre-established congregations, which was difficult for the newly established group in a dense city like Philadelphia. After the first two years in Philadelphia, they discovered that they would prefer their own congregation within the Catholic church. On January 29, 1882, a local chapter of the Polish National Alliance recognized the need for the establishment of a Polish Catholic parish led by a Polish-speaking priest.

### **Foundation of a Polish-Catholic Community in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

An infrastructure of interpersonal relationships represented by organizations and associations such as the Roman Catholic parish was a further manifestation of the stability of the community. Finally, the continued performance of this territorial community worked to preserve the group's ethnicity.<sup>12</sup>

After the meeting in January 1882, a resolution to petition the Archbishop of Philadelphia to send the congregation a priest, which included the following: Xavier Karczewski, Charles Drehmann, John Piotrowski, John Nepomucene Szweda, Adalbert Nowak, Anthony Symboll, Stanislaus Robaszkiewicz, and Michael Ostrowski, which included people from Philadelphia, Phoenixville and Camden. A committee was then formed to visit and petition the Most Rev. Archbishop James F. Wood, which resulted in the founding of the St. Laurentius Church later that year. However, in the earliest days, the parish was known as "Holy Cross," which was soon changed to St. Laurentius.<sup>13</sup>

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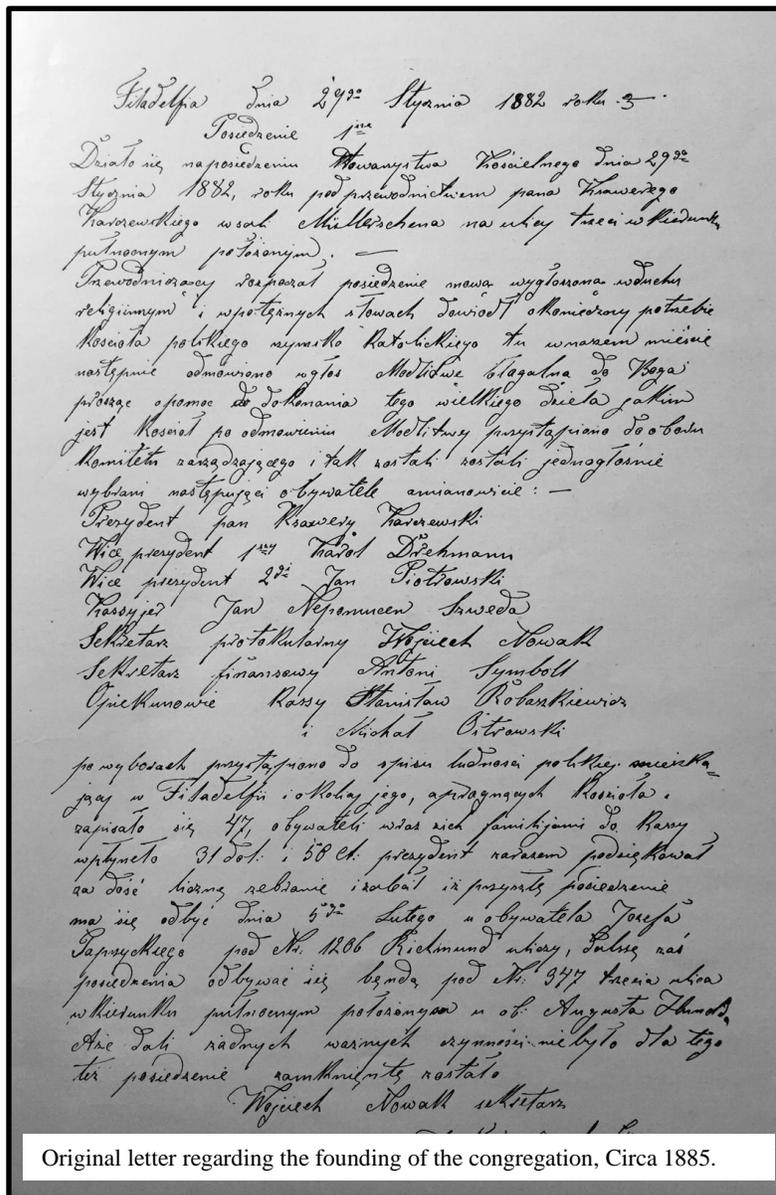
<sup>11</sup> Golab, Carol Ann. *The Polish Communities of Philadelphia, 1870-1920: Immigrant Distribution and Adaptation in Urban America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1971.

<sup>12</sup> Golab, Carol Ann., *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> 75<sup>th</sup>

## St. Laurentius Roman Catholic Church—the First Polish Catholic Colony in Philadelphia

St. Laurentius (the Latin form of St. Lawrence) of Rome was a martyr of the early church. As chief of the deacons of the Roman congregation of the Christian Church, Laurentius administered the church's budget, notably that portion of the budget dedicated to helping the poor. The Roman Emperor Valerian began his Christian persecutions and, as a leader in the clergy and member of the upper class, Laurentius was a prime target. The Roman government demanded that Laurentius turn over the riches of the Church in exchange for saving his life. The popular narrative in the Church is that Laurentius asked for three days to gather the money. He then spent those three days distributing as much Church money to the poor as he could. When the government demanded he turn over the money he presented himself, along with the poor, crippled, and blind as the “true



Original letter regarding the founding of the congregation, Circa 1885.

treasures of the Church.” He was executed by being roasted alive on a gridiron and apparently told his executioners quite calmly, “You may turn me over; I am done on this side.”<sup>14</sup> He was martyred in the year 258. In addition to veneration in the Roman Catholic Church, Laurentius is venerated in Eastern Orthodoxy, Lutheranism, and the Anglican Communion.

On January 29, 1882, the organizers of St. Laurentius’ met for the first time in Mullersken Hall on Third Street. The organizers petitioned the Archbishop of Philadelphia to send them a Polish-speaking priest. Forty-seven families contributed

<sup>14</sup> “Laurence Deacon and Martyr (10 August 258)” Lectionary of the Episcopal Church, Revised 2009

\$31.50 into the Treasury. The families came from Philadelphia, Phoenixville, and Camden. Archbishop James F. Wood, D.D. officially founded the parish in 1882. Originally, it was named Holy Cross. Its early services were held in the basement of St. Boniface Church, Norris Square (demolished). Aside from St. Boniface's, the congregation also worshiped at Friendship Hall, formerly at the corner of Norris and Sepviva Streets.<sup>15</sup> The Archbishop invited Rev. Julian Dutkiewicz to come from Brooklyn, New York; however, this was a short stay. Apparently, he and this particular Polish congregation did not get on well and, in all official records, his memory is generally removed. He was succeeded by Rev. Emil Kattein, who was a Polish-speaker of Germanic origin. Kattein changed the name of the church from Holy Cross to St. Laurentius.

After the acceptance of Kattein as their priest, the congregation worked to procure a piece of land for their new house of worship. While "orange men," a Protestant fraternal order known for starting riots, stood in their way for quite some time, the parishioners were able to secure a lot at the corner of Vienna and Memphis Streets in the Fishtown neighborhood of the larger Kensington district.

Charles Schmitt, of the City of Philadelphia, dealer in feathers, and Melina, his wife, and John Gartner (signed "John Gärtner"), of the city, tavern keeper, and Lizzie, his wife, to the Most Rev. Patrick John Ryan, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, for three properties:

One, lot with building on the South side of Vienna Street [now Berks] at the distance of 179 feet East of Tulip Street, Containing in front on Tulip Street 18ft and in depth back to Cook Street [now Wilt] 114 feet

Two, lot with buildings on the South side of Vienna Street at the distance of 215 feet East of Tulip Street and at the West side of Memphis Street, Containing in front on Tulip Street 25ft and in depth back to Cook Street 113 feet 8&3/4 inches

Three, lot with buildings on the South side of Vienna Street at the distance of 197 feet East of Tulip Street, Containing in front on Tulip Street 18ft and in depth back to Cook Street 114 feet more or less

In Trust "for the Roman Catholic Congregation of St. Laurentius." Subject to a mortgage debt of \$5,000. Acknowledged on 24 December 1885.<sup>16</sup>

When the lot was finally procured, a basement was erected on the site, pending construction of the larger, complete superstructure of their house of worship.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "St. Laurentius, 1882," Historical Sketches of the Catholic Churches and Institutions of Philadelphia. Philadelphia: 1895, p. 138.

<sup>16</sup> Recorded on 13 January 1886 in Philadelphia Deed Book GGP, No. 102, p. 121

<sup>17</sup> 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet. St. Laurentius Church. Philadelphia: 1957.

The basement of St. Laurentius Church was blessed by Archbishop Ryan in the presence of a large congregation on Sunday, December 20, 1885. After the blessing, a Solemn High Mass was celebrated by Rev. Hubert Schick, the rector of St. Alphonsus', assisted by Rev. Father Litz, C.S.S.R., rector of St. Boniface's, as deacon. Rev. A. Schulte, professor of the seminary, acted as master of ceremonies. The sermon of this service was given in Polish was preached by Rev. Kattein. In his closing remarks, Archbishop Ryan recognized that Poland was a "martyr nation," persecuted in faith with its people suffering exile and death for their beliefs.<sup>18</sup> Father Kattein served the congregation until May 1887. That June, Rev. Adalbert Malusecki succeeded Father Kattein.

Within the first six months of Father Malusecki's leadership, the congregation raised roughly \$24,000, which led to the construction of the congregation's permanent superstructure—the Gothic Revival building that stands to-date in 2015.<sup>19</sup> Archbishop Ryan again presided over the dedication, and the Knights of St. Casimir (a Polish Roman Catholic Fraternal Organization) led a parade for the occasion. High Mass was celebrated by Rev. Stanislaus Roddowicz of Baltimore. Rev. Francis A. Brady and Rev. James B. Hogan of St. Charles' Seminary served as Deacon and sub-deacon respectively.<sup>20</sup> In March 1895, Father Malusecki removed to Reading, Pennsylvania.<sup>21</sup>

Father Malusecki was succeeded by Rev. Father Tarnowski in 1895, and it was under his leadership that the buildings housing the rectory and the convent were constructed in the last years of the nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup> The Parish, like many churches, experienced some drama. In 1899, the priest-in-charge of St. Laurentius', Rev. Gabriel Kraus, sued a member of the congregation—John Winiarz. The disagreement resulted in the formation of St. Josaphat's Polish Catholic Church in Manayunk, an interesting factoid that modernity can allow us to note. Winiarz apparently made the mistake of accusing the Rev. Kraus, along with two other parish council members, of being thieves.<sup>23</sup>

In 1896, the Chamberlain of the Pope, Rev. Peter Wawrzniak, celebrated a High Mass at St. Laurentius' for the occasion of the Twenty-third annual Polish Catholic Union Convention. Rev. Frank Lange of Chicago served as Deacon and Rev. J. Kasprzycki, also of Chicago, served as sub-deacon. Rev. Tarouski delivered the sermon.<sup>24</sup>

In the early 1900's, Polish Catholics in America actually petitioned the Pope to appoint a Bishop of their own nationality to oversee them. As a result, the Pope sent The Most Rev. Albin S. Simon, an Archbishop of high rank at the Vatican. Simon conducted a mission trip throughout the United States that included five nights in Philadelphia. During his stay, he was a guest of Rev. Kraus at St. Laurentius'.<sup>25</sup> Additional property was purchased to the northwest of the current parcel for additional construction in 1911.

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<sup>18</sup> "The New Polish Church," *The Times*. Philadelphia: 21 December 1885.

<sup>19</sup> "St. Laurentius, 1882," *Historical Sketches of the Catholic Churches and Institutions of Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: 1895, p. 138.

<sup>20</sup> "St. Laurentius' Church," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*: 22 September 1890.

<sup>21</sup> Kirlin, Joseph L. *Catholicity in Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: 1926.

<sup>22</sup> Kirlin, Joseph L. *Catholicity in Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: 1926.

<sup>23</sup> "Sued by a Priest: Father Kraus Brings Action Against John Winiarz, Who Furnishes Bail," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. 17 March 1899.

<sup>24</sup> "Polish Catholic Union: Twenty-third Annual Convention Now in Session," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. 18 of September 1896.

<sup>25</sup> "Polish Archbishop Here," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. 26 May 1905.

The Most Rev. Edmond Francis Prendergast, the Right Rev. William Keiran and the Right Rev. Nevin F. Fisher, executors and trustees of the will of Most Rev. Patrick John Ryan, late Archbishop of Philadelphia, to the Most Rev. Edmond Francis Prendergast, the present Archbishop of Philadelphia, for "All the property and effects real and personal whatsoever and wheresoever situate of which said the Most Reverend Patrick John Ryan died seized of possessed of." Recites the will of P.J. Ryan, dated 21 August 1884, in which he gave all property he had to his executors in trust to turn over the same to his duly appointed successor as Archbishop of Philadelphia. Acknowledged on 26 July 1911.<sup>26</sup>

In 1912, the church's lighting system was converted from gas to electric. Furthermore, the church was "embellished," receiving fourteen Murals of scenes in the history of the Church in Poland. The artist of the pieces was a then well-known artist named Scataglia.<sup>27</sup>

The property further northwest was procured for \$1 on July 10, 1918 and the school was constructed after that time.

The Right Rev. William Kieran, the Right Rev. Nevin F. Fisher and the Right Rev. John J. McCort, executors and trustees of the will of the Most Rev. Edmond Francis Prendergast, late Archbishop of Philadelphia, to the Most Rev. Dennis Joseph Dougherty, present Archbishop of Philadelphia, for "All the property and effects real and personal whatsoever and wheresoever situate of which said the Most Reverend Edmond Francis Prendergast died seized of possessed of." Recites the will of E.F. Prendergast, dated 26 July 1911, in which he gave all property he had to his executors in trust to turn over the same to his duly appointed successor as Archbishop of Philadelphia. Acknowledged on 10 July 1918.<sup>28</sup>

In 1919, a new Hall Pipe Organ was installed at a cost of \$20,000.<sup>29</sup>

Rev. Kraus played an important role in Polish-American relations in 1920. It was then that, in Philadelphia, the Emergency Committee for Polish Defense was chosen in response to the ongoing war between Poland and Russia. American Poles wanted to support their country and show unity as a people. The Emergency Committee, which included Rev. Krause, along with officials from the Polish Government Loan, visited the White House on August 18, 1920 to appeal to President Woodrow Wilson to support Poland in the war.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Recorded on 5 January 1913 in Philadelphia Deed Book ELT, No. 1545, p. 386

<sup>27</sup> "Week's Religious News," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Philadelphia: 14 September 1912.

<sup>28</sup> Recorded on 6 April 1919 in Philadelphia Deed Book JMH, No. 525, p. 17

<sup>29</sup> 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet. St. Laurentius Church. Philadelphia: 1982.

<sup>30</sup> "Phila. Poles Deny Reports on Morale," *Philadelphia Inquirer*. 18 August 1920.

In 1932, the Golden Jubilee year for the Parish, Rev. Bronislaus E. Rutt was appointed as rector. May 30, 1932 was the day of celebration for the parish. It included a grand parade with flags and banners and several bands. The parade marched to Cedar Street, to Cumberland Street, to Aramingo Avenue, and to Girard Avenue and Berks Street, where it picked up Denis Cardinal Dougherty and marched him to the church. At 10:30AM, the Solemn Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated by the Most Rev. Gerald P. O'Hara, the Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia. Likewise, at the Diamond Jubilee celebration on November 17, 1957, a Solemn Pontifical Mass was celebrated at the church by the Most Rev. J. Carroll McCormick, Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia.

On April 18, 1982 the Church held a Centenary Mass of the Parish. Rev. Leonard Lewandowski, now Pastor of St. Titus' Church in Norristown, invited John Cardinal Krol of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to preside at the Mass.<sup>31</sup>



Women's Organization of St. Laurentius. Courtesy of the St. Laurentius Collection.

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<sup>31</sup> 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet. St. Laurentius Church. Philadelphia: 1982.

### *The Culture of St. Laurentius*

Celebrations that involved special groups and/or the entire St. Laurentius Parish were an integral part of community life for the Polish Catholics of the Kensington and Northern Liberties. Throughout this nomination, period photographs have been presented, some even out of order to present the flavor of the community that historically radiated the parish. Congregation and pastoral anniversaries were always cause for large and often



Secret Invitation to a St. Laurentius Event, which is typically written in Polish

elaborate community celebrations. Other annual rituals were also celebrated—for example, on Sunday March 4, 1951, the Twelfth Annual Communion Breakfast was held by the “Holy Name Society of St. Laurentius Parish” in the Parish Auditorium. A booklet of a program was printed up for the event and also as a physical memento of the ritual.<sup>32</sup>

Aside from the Holy Name Society, the parish also featured the following organizations over the years: the Catholic Ladies Guild of St. Laurentius Parish; the League of the Sacred Heart of St. Laurentius; the St. Laurentius Alter Boys; the St. Laurentius Choir; the St. Laurentius

Club; the St. Laurentius Catholic Young Men’s Club; the St. Laurentius Midgets Basketball Team; the Young Ladies of the Immaculate Conception Society of the St. Laurentius Parish; and Sigma Tau Lambda, among numerous others that existed over the years.<sup>33</sup> Events were hosted to raise money for the various organizations and these events usually evolved into annual rituals and/or traditions. The Third Annual Dance, with its Art Deco-inspired program, was held on Saturday, May 14, 1938 by the St. Laurentius Altar Boys.<sup>34</sup> The same year, the Laurentian Dance was held by the St. Laurentius Club, featuring Walter Dombkowski and his Radio & Recording Orchestra.<sup>35</sup> The primary objective in this section is to illustrate the complex culture of the church and its congregation that existed as the center of the Polish Catholics.

Other outside organizations hosted events and supported St. Laurentius, as well as other Polish Catholic congregations: Catholic Ladies Guild; Eighteenth Ward Polish Republican Club; Gr. 301 Polish Women’s Alliance; the Greater Northeast Polish American Citizens’ Association; the Knights of Columbus, Madonna Council No. 3932; the Kosciuszko Literary Association; the North East Polish American Citizens Association; the Northwest Polish Citizens’ Association; the Polish American Citizens, Harmonia & Ostwiata Club; the Polish American Citizens’ League of Philadelphia and State of Pennsylvania; the Polish American Progressive Club of 15<sup>th</sup> Ward; the Polish Beneficial Association; the Polish American Congress, Inc., East Pennsylvania District; the Society of the Polish Crown; etc. All of these organizations participated in events held by St. Laurentius and respected their successes as part of a greater community.

<sup>32</sup> Twelve Annual Communion Breakfast. Holy Name Society, Saint Laurentius Parish. Philadelphia: 1951.

<sup>33</sup> Manuscript Collection of St. Laurentius Parish. Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia. Visited 9 April 2015.

<sup>34</sup><sup>34</sup> Third Annual Dance Program. St. Laurentius Altar Boys. Philadelphia: 1938

<sup>35</sup> The Laurentian Dance Program. St. Laurentius Club. Philadelphia: 1938.



Mother Mary Angela,  
Founder of the Felician  
Sisters

### The Early Polish Catholic Colonies, Compatriots, and Communities of Philadelphia

Founded in 1882, St. Laurentius is the first and oldest Polish Catholic Church in the Philadelphia area. However, in 1889, the Felician Sisters of the Order of St. Francis were introduced to the Diocese at the invitation of Archbishop Ryan. Earlier that year, the parochial schools of the “Polish Catholic Church of St. Laurentius, at Vienna and Tulip Streets, in the Kensington district...” had been officially opened, and a small community of the Felician Sisters came to Philadelphia where they “...took charge of their little exiled compatriots...”

The Felician Sisters of the Order of St. Francis were founded about the year 1850, at Cracow, Poland, by Mother Mary Angela, the first Superioress of the Order. The first colony to reach America settled at Polonia, Wisconsin, in 1875, at the invitation of Rev. Father Dombroski, who was pastor of a scattered Polish settlement in the Western wilds. Though their chief work is the charge of orphans and the distressed, they are successful teachers of their own people.<sup>36</sup>



Graduates of the Parochial School, 1910s. Courtesy of the St. Laurentius Collection.

Administering the parochial school was the only work of the Felician Sisters in Philadelphia, living in their own convent at 1640 Vienna Street. While called to serve the parochial school at St. Laurentius, they still existed as their own order.

After the founding of St. Laurentius, a strong Eastern European migration of Polish immigrants came from the old Austro-Hungarian Empire and Czarist Russian to the mining and

industrial centers of Pennsylvania. To meet this need, eighteen Polish parishes were established by Archbishop Ryan, six of which included: St. Stanislaw in 1891; St. John Cantius’ in 1892; St. Josaphat in 1898; St. Adalbert in 1904; St. Ladislaus in 1906; and

<sup>36</sup> “Felician Sisters of the Order of St. Francis. Introduced into the Diocese in 1889,” Historical Sketches of the Catholic Churches and Institutions of Philadelphia. Philadelphia: 1895, p. 210.

St. Hedwigs in 1907.<sup>37</sup>

St. Laurentius was the only Catholic Church devoted to Polish Catholics until late in the year 1893, when the Polish Catholic Colony at Bridesburg had become strong enough to support its own church. This was necessary within their growing community and St. Laurentius was too far away to make a Sunday morning commute.<sup>38</sup>

Securing a lot at Orthodox and Thompson Streets, the Bridesburg Polish Catholic Colony first worshiped in a frame chapel that was dedicated by Archbishop Ryan on December 17, 1894. The colony became St. John Cantius' in time.<sup>39</sup> Also in 1894, a Lithuanian congregation was founded—St. Anthony's, and while politically related to Poland, the Lithuanians requested their own church and their own priest.<sup>40</sup>

From this time forward through the 1910s, the Catholic Church developed as a significant force in Philadelphia and the nation. In 1883, Philadelphia was the second largest diocese in the United State with 45 churches in Philadelphia and 56 churches with resident-priests in the surrounding counties. There were roughly half a million Catholics in the Philadelphia area with the greatest number in the city, most of which were an immigrant people.

In November 1904, a German Catholic Church at Alleghany and Gual was opened to the Russian Polish residents of Kensington. Attendance grew over time, and, eventually, St. Adalberts was founded.<sup>41</sup> Numerous other congregations were to follow as the Polish Catholic population of Philadelphia grew in the first half of the twentieth century.

### **Polish Population of Kensington and Northern Liberties**

The Kensington District or neighborhood was the embodiment of the Workshop of the World that once defined Philadelphia. Of the Polish immigrants that arrived at Philadelphia, several groups were scattered about the Kensington neighborhood and also in Northern Liberties, the dividing lines of which appear to have been somewhat blurred. Most of these immigrants owed their existence to the textile industry. However, in time, the Polish population's exclusively textile-based employment diversified to include machinists and metal workers, which reflected Kensington's second major industry—hardware and machine shop manufacture. This entire population made up the congregants of St. Laurentius Church. Located in North Kensington by 1910, there was a tight cluster of Poles near the southwest corner of The Protestant Episcopal Hospital—around Front Street and Lehigh Avenue. Waterloo Street was the central thoroughfare of this community. Consisting largely of German Poles, most of them were weavers who had been attracted to the area by large textile firms, comprising roughly twenty-six percent of the larger local Polish population. The majority of the textile workers were employed by the Hardwick and Magee Company, carpet manufacturers that employed nearly 600

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<sup>37</sup> Connelly, James F. *The History of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

<sup>38</sup> "St. John Cantius', 1893," *Historical Sketches of the Catholic Churches and Institutions of Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: 1895, p. 139.

<sup>39</sup> "St. John Cantius', 1893," *ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> "St. Anthony's', 1894," *Historical Sketches of the Catholic Churches and Institutions of Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: 1895, p. 139.

<sup>41</sup> "A New Polish Church," *Philadelphia Public Ledger*. Philadelphia: 29 August 1908.

people in the 1910s. John Bromley and Sons, the Smyrna rug manufacturer, employed 1,375 people, some of whom were Poles. The John B. Stetson Company and the Rockford Knitting Company, as well as the Jonathan Ring and Son, Inc. also employed many of the Polish textile workers of Northern Liberties and Kensington.



First communion class of St. Laurentius, 1888. Courtesy of the St. Laurentius Collection.

Another North Kensington cluster could be found between Front and Second Streets, Westmoreland to Tioga. Unlike the rest of Kensington in the first decades of the twentieth century, this area was not fully developed. In 1915, empty lots and open fields were still available, housing was relatively new. Almost one-half of the dwellings in the area were constructed after 1900, the vast majority of which were row houses—rental being slightly higher than South Philadelphia and Northern Liberties. Home ownership of Poles was more

common in North Kensington. Generally, the Poles of Kensington were permanent and committed residents of their neighborhood, being descendants of German Poles and early Polish settlers. This group made up the oldest Polish Philadelphians, making up groups of skilled versus unskilled workers. Because this sect of the Polish population were skilled workers, they stayed in the city longer than other groups of Philadelphia's Polish population.<sup>42</sup>

In the early years of Polish settlement in Philadelphia through 1914, machinists and metals workers found work at the Bernstine Manufacturing Company, makers of metal bedsteads and bedsprings. Other major employers were the Schaum and Uhlinger Textile Machinery Company, S.L. Allen Company, manufacturers of agricultural implements, North Brothers Manufacturing Company, hardware specialties, and, after 1914, the Smith, Dum and Company, manufacturers of textile machinery. Ninety percent of the hose made in the United States was dyed with Smith, Drum machinery.<sup>43</sup>

Polish machinists, metal workers, and laborers were employed at the Abram Cox Stove Company, the Enterprise Manufacturing Company of America, and the Thomas Devlin Manufacturing Company, most of which were manufacturers of malleable and grey iron, steel, brass, bronze castings to order, iron fittings for gas, and steam and water thumb screws. Companies like Devlin provided employment for the unskilled Polish immigrants due to the type of work required. The same was true of the city's tanneries and leather factories. However, most Polish people in Northern Kensington were skill workers. Very few were self-employed or in service occupations. Unskilled workers consisted of

<sup>42</sup> Report of Philadelphia Real Estate Survey, p. 329-330.

<sup>43</sup> Stevens, Pennsylvania: Titan of Industry, III, p. 734-756.

roughly ten percent of the population. Almost forty percent were weavers, stichers, knitters, etc., largely consisting of German Poles. However, this meant that the population depended on the good and bad portion of the textile industry.

The Poles had divided themselves into several clusters, each of which was definable in terms of its occupational industrial structures. Nevertheless, the Poles of Kensington and Northern Liberties formed one community, that of St. Laurentius Parish. It was the Parish which united them; it was the Parish which gave structure and meaning to their existence.<sup>44</sup>

By 1915, there were roughly 4,464 Polish people in Philadelphia.<sup>45</sup> Kensington and Northern Liberties only accounted for a small part of the larger Polish population; however, these communities also accounted for the earliest of these immigrants.<sup>46</sup>

### **The Community and Cultural Significance of the Interior of St. Laurentius Church**

The Interior of St. Laurentius Church on E. Berks Street has significant character, interest, or value as part of the cultural characteristics of the City of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as it embodies the development of a community of a cultural minority in Philadelphia through popular fashions of nineteenth century Philadelphia architecture and the later emergency of its own cultural past through a program of improvements to embellish the interior architectural effect. Owing to its location in the section of Kensington known as Fishtown, the remarkable Interior of St. Laurentius Church is an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood and the larger Polish-American community of Philadelphia. Furthermore, the Interior of St. Laurentius Church is a symbol of the cultural, economic, social and historical heritage of the Polish-immigrant and Polish-American population of the City of Philadelphia from the time of its conception to-date, standing as a historic touchstone between the old country—Poland, and a new life and cultural development in America. The Interior of St. Laurentius Church is the first and oldest Roman Catholic Church building of the sixteen Polish-Catholic congregations that eventually comprised the larger community in Philadelphia.

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<sup>44</sup> Golab, Carol Ann. *The Polish Communities of Philadelphia, 1870-1920: Immigrant Distribution and Adaptation in Urban America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1971.

<sup>45</sup> Boyd's City Directory, 1915.

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