

## **COMMENT ON NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION**

### **ADDRESS: 1900 W. York Street, Bethel Presbyterian Church**

**OVERVIEW:** The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) has requested comments from the Philadelphia Historical Commission on the National Register nomination of 1900 West York Street located in the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood of North Philadelphia and historically known as the Bethel Presbyterian Church. PHMC is charged with implementing federal historic preservation regulations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including overseeing the National Register of Historic Places in the state. PHMC reviews all such nominations before forwarding them to the National Park Service for action. As part of the process, PHMC must solicit comments on every National Register nomination from the appropriate local government. The Philadelphia Historical Commission speaks on behalf of the City of Philadelphia in historic preservation matters including the review of National Register nominations. Under federal regulation, the local government not only must provide comments, but must also provide a forum for public comment on nominations. Such a forum is provided during the Philadelphia Historical Commission's meetings.

Bethel Presbyterian Church of North Philadelphia is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Social History and Ethnic Heritage – Black. While the building was built and occupied by a white congregation for 43 years, as Philadelphia's demographics changed, so did the congregation. This transition from a white congregation to a Black congregation occurred under the leadership of the Reverend Robert Lee Maffett, a strong advocate of civil rights. The Rev. Maffett helped to create the North Philadelphia District Council, acted as Chaplain for the Philadelphia General Hospital, and worked to help poorer members of the community find housing and employment within the community. The Rev. Maffett expected this level of activism from the congregation and used his pulpit to organize for local civil rights causes. The church became an important community center, offering youth services, sports leagues, and more. The Bethel Presbyterian Church's congregation was made up of working-class African Americans and became a cornerstone to a vibrant but challenged community, left behind by white flight. The period of significance for Criterion A is from 1947, when the church transitioned to a Black congregation, to 1968, when the first Black pastor, the Reverend Robert Lee Maffett, left the congregation.

Bethel Presbyterian Church is a Late Gothic-Revival building, designed by Pennsylvania architect Charles W. Bolton and built by Philadelphia builder Burd P. Evans, is additionally significant under Criterion C, Architecture. Charles Bolton was one of the leading ecclesiastic architects in Philadelphia during the early twentieth century, and the building is the only known church in the region designed by Bolton and completed in the Gothic Revival style with an auditorium/Akron-plan. Bethel Presbyterian Church is a 120-year-old structure that is a well-preserved piece of architecture with few alterations made over those years. The period of significance for Criterion C extends from the church's construction in 1904 to 1910 when the sabbath school was built. This property is not listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.

Although it is a religious property, Bethel Presbyterian Church derives its significance from its associations with social trends in history and as an important example of the architectural work of Charles W. Bolton, not the history of religious practice at the location.



*View of Bethel Presbyterian Church from the intersection of W. York and N. Garnet Streets, looking southeast.*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

**1. Name of Property**Historic name: Bethel Presbyterian Church

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**2. Location**Street & number: 1900 West York StreetCity or town: Philadelphia State: PA County: PhiladelphiaNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination \_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets \_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_\_national \_\_\_\_statewide Xlocal

Applicable National Register Criteria:

XA \_\_\_\_B XC \_\_\_\_D\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title:\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☒

District

☐

Site

☐

Bethel Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
County and State

Structure

☐

Object

☐

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

1

Noncontributing

buildings

sites

structures

objects

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Name of Property

Late Gothic Revival

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

County and State

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Granite, Limestone

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

### Summary Paragraph

Located in a primarily residential part of North Philadelphia, the Bethel Presbyterian Church is a Late Gothic Revival building, designed by Pennsylvania architect Charles W. Bolton and built by Philadelphia builder Burd P. Evans. Built in the Akron style, the church has two main components: a large sanctuary with a corner bell tower (built in 1904) and a three-story sabbath school (built in 1910). The building exterior is made of Port Deposit granite with Indiana limestone trimmings and adorned with several gargoyles. The sanctuary is characteristic of auditorium-plan churches of its period and includes original woodwork throughout with a 3,600 square foot auditorium featuring flying buttresses and stained-glass windows. The sabbath school is connected to the sanctuary through original sliding wood and glass doors and features a central all-purpose room with a low stage and smaller rooms located beneath a balcony. After the present congregation was formed in 1948, the basement below the sanctuary was dug out by hand by church members to add a kitchen and other amenities. Some modernizations over the years were completed in the interior of the building, such as installation of AC units, updated electric lighting and outlets, and security features. The exterior has had minor changes over the decades including a lighted sign board. The property retains integrity of design, workmanship, and materials, and is easily recognizable as a prominent local religious building.

Bethel Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
County and State

## Narrative Description

Bethel Presbyterian Church resides in North Central Philadelphia in a primarily residential neighborhood made up of two and three-story brick row homes. The neighborhood is bounded by train tracks several blocks to the west and Broad Street (the neighborhood's commercial corridor) to the east. The property at 1900 West York Street or at the corner of 19<sup>th</sup> and York Streets (see Figure 7) is approximately 7,800 square feet with a full perimeter of 372 feet. Bethel Presbyterian Church will be discussed for purposes of clarity as two buildings, the sanctuary building and the sabbath school, even though they are joined together as one. The sanctuary building was built in 1904 and houses the sanctuary and bell tower on the northeast corner. The bell tower houses the narthex and entrances to the sanctuary. The sabbath school building was completed in 1910 and houses the all-purpose room, classrooms, and offices. The primary entrance used for both buildings is located in the northeast corner of the sabbath school that directly



*Photo 1: Northeast corner of the sanctuary building with a view of the sabbath school*

connects with the sanctuary. The church takes up the entire north side of the block adjacent to York Street between 19<sup>th</sup> Street and Garnet Street. The south side of the sanctuary and sabbath school were once

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

attached to two-story rowhouses common to the area (one on 19<sup>th</sup> Street and one on Garnet Street). The party rowhouses have since been demolished, leaving vacant land to the south of the church.

## Exterior

The sanctuary building (see Photo 2) has an auditorium style plan, with a crenelated three-story bell tower in the northeast corner housing the two main door entrances (see Photo 3) between stone buttresses on the first floor and narrow windows on the second. The upper tower originally housed a large bell and features an eight-foot-high arched limestone traceried opening on each side (see Photo 1). The bell tower is framed on either side by gabled east and north facades which both feature 20-foot-high stained-glass windows. The two main arched doorways are decorated on each side with the original stone cherubs (see Photo 3).



Photo 2 – East facade of sanctuary building facing west



Photo 3 – Detail of east tower doors featuring original stonework

The sabbath school was added six years later in 1910 and is 63 feet by 57 feet. The exterior of the building corresponds with the Gothic style and is made with granite and limestone materials. The architect for the sabbath school was also Charles W. Bolton, as his original design envisioned the building's construction in two phases. The builder of the sabbath school was William T. Fox. The north side of the building (see Photo 4) is joined to the sanctuary with a two-story one bay connector to the three-bay section that contains a combined six tripartite stained-glass windows on the first and second levels, as well as three basement windows. Decorative stone gables are on top of each pair of stained-glass windows. The northwest side of the sabbath school building (see Photo 4) contains three more pairs of tripartite windows, one on each floor with a basement window below. The first bay window on the west side is arched and has a decorative stone gable. The second and third bays have no arch and no gable

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

and are topped with a painted cornice. The fourth bay contains a service stair entrance with a simple two-pane window above the door. To the left of the door, is a small basement window below and one stained-glass window above. The south façade contains four tripartite stained-glass windows on the west side, two for each story and a smaller one-story stained-glass window to the east. A stucco chimney divides the sabbath school from the sanctuary building.



*Photo 4 – Northwest corner of sabbath school facing southeast. Source: Google.*

## **Interior**

The main level of the interior of the sanctuary building contains the nave, approximately 63 feet by 63 feet. The ceiling is supported with a unique arrangement of flying buttresses (see Photo 5) with decorative angels (see Photo 6) that connect to two central locations, both adorned by period chain and metal lighting holders (see Photo 7). The interior finish has wainscoting, architraves, and panel work throughout. The capacity of the sanctuary is about 350 people and is in a fan-shaped seating arrangement of concentric, curved pews and a floor which slopes downward toward a raised pulpit platform (see Photo 7) at the northwest corner of the room. This arrangement is commonly known as the “auditorium”

Bethel Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
County and State



*Photo 5 – Sanctuary facing southeast*



*Photo 6 – Sanctuary pews, pulpit platform, and hanging metal lighting facing southwest*

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

configuration to increase seating and decrease the distance between individual worshippers and the pulpit.<sup>1</sup> On the west side of the room are wood and glass folding doors (see Photo 8) used to connect the sanctuary to the sabbath school building's all-purpose room.

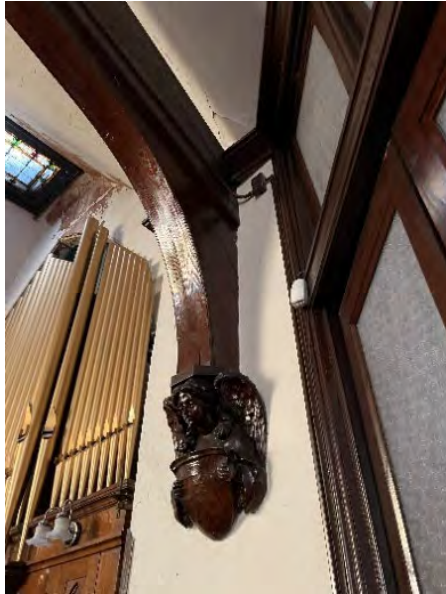


Photo 7 – Sanctuary woodwork and cherub to the right of the chancel



Photo 8 – Sanctuary wood and glass folding doors facing west

The two large windows are memorials to two congregants at Bethel. The north window of the sanctuary is named "Christ, the Good Shepherd" (see Photo 9) and was a gift of Mr. James Renwick Hogg, in memory of his aunt, Mrs. Sarah Jane Harvey. The east window of the sanctuary is named "Mary, and the Infant Child" (see Photo 10) and was a gift of her family and friends as a memorial to Miss Mary Emma Paist, President of the Christian Endeavor Society.<sup>2</sup> The organ, organ pipes, pulpit, and baptistery are elements on the chancel (see Photo 7). The organ was designed and built by C. S. Haskell, of Philadelphia. His work includes over 100 organs in the Philadelphia vicinity.<sup>3</sup> A stained-glass window skylight is on the ceiling above the organ pipes.

<sup>1</sup> Angelique Bamberg, "Architecture Around Us," *Western Pennsylvania History*, Summer (2019), volume 102, Number 2.

<sup>2</sup> Bethel Presbyterian Church, "Dedicatory Services Program Booklet," May 29 – June 5, 1910, Bethel Presbyterian Sabbath School.

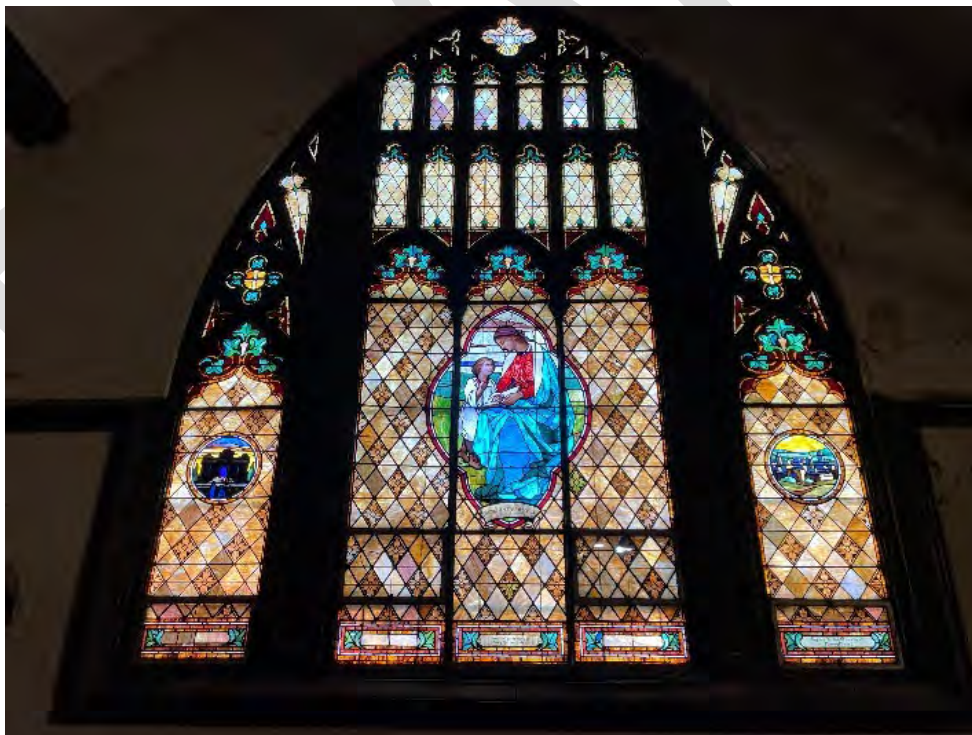
<sup>3</sup> David H. Fox, "The Organs Of C. S. Haskell, Inc.," *The Organ Historical Society*, Volume 29, Number 4, (1986), 17-26.

Bethel Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
County and State



*Photo 9 – Sanctuary window “Christ, the Good Shepherd”  
facing east*



*Photo 10 - Sanctuary window “Mary, and the Infant Child” facing north*

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

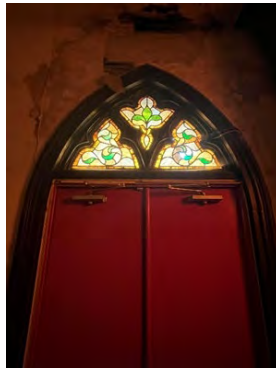
Name of Property

County and State

The bell tower doors to the sanctuary building open into a small narthex with two arched doorways (see Photo 11 and 12) into the auditorium. The decorative glass above the interior doors matches the stained-glass on the exterior doors. The bell tower also contains several small upper levels that are only accessible by permanent ladders. The second level above the narthex is setup as a sabbath school room, complete with blackboard and raised platform for the instructor and original woodwork (see Photo 13).



*Photo 11 – Interior bell tower door facing south*



*Photo 12 – Exterior bell tower door facing east*

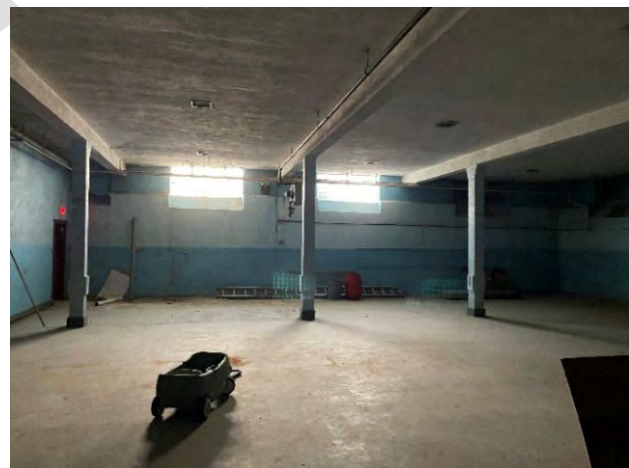


*Photo 13 – Sabbath school room in second floor of bell tower*

Below the sanctuary is a basement level that houses a kitchen, fellowship hall, restrooms, an office, mechanical room, and several storage rooms (see Photo 14). This area was excavated of red clay and gravel shovel-by-shovelful in 1950 by many members of the congregation and the pastor. The sabbath school building has three levels, including a 14.5-foot-high ceiling in the lower-level basement (see Photo 15). The large single open room was known as the Bethel Community Center.



*Photo 14 – Sanctuary basement level Fellowship Hall facing southeast*



*Photo 15 – Sabbath school basement level facing west*

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

The next level of the sabbath school is the main floor with entrances from York Street and Garnet Street.

This level includes a large all-purpose room (see Photo 16) with stage in the southwest corner of the room, a pastor study, a choir room with storage, a restroom, and a classroom (see Photo 17). These rooms are below the balcony surrounding the all-purpose room on the north and west sides.



*Photo 16 – (left side) Sabbath school all-purpose room with stage and galleries facing northeast*



*Photo 17 – (right side) Choir room under balcony on north side of sabbath school building facing northwest*

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

County and State

Above the all-purpose room on the upper floor are galleries (see Photo 18). The galleries can be used for additional seating on a tiered floor or can be divided into four classrooms. The floors were tiered into five levels on the west side and seven levels on the north side. This building has eight large and four smaller stained-glass windows and a large skylight in the all-purpose room. This was an orderly, yet flexible, system in which classrooms were connected to a main lecture hall and also to the main sanctuary via sliding folding or sliding partitions as part of the Akron plan.<sup>4</sup> There are two stairways, one at the north entrance and one at the west entrance of the building. Each one gives access to all levels. The stairways and bannisters (see Photo 19) are original.



*Photo 18 – Sabbath school balcony west side facing north*



*Photo 19 – Sabbath school building stairway on west corner of building facing southeast*

The Bethel Presbyterian Church retains all seven aspects of integrity – location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The majority of the building’s exterior and interior are relatively unchanged since its construction more than 120 years ago. The most significant change was the addition of the basement level in the 1950s. While this subterranean addition changed some circulation patterns in the sabbath school, it did not substantially affect the rest of the building. The location of Bethel Presbyterian Church has not changed from 1900 West York Street from its inception. The setting also retains integrity. While there have been economic and demographic changes in the neighborhood, the local neighborhood— primarily made up of low- and middle-income residential homes—has remained stable since the late nineteenth century, when residents were attracted to the many factory jobs in North Philadelphia. The workmanship and craftsmanship of the builders, Burd P. Evans and William T. Fox and

<sup>4</sup> Bamberg, “Architecture Around Us,” *Western Pennsylvania History*, Summer 2019, volume 102 number 2.

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

their workers remains intact in the interior as well as the exterior of the building. There is intricate  
woodwork throughout the whole building, whether in the sanctuary or the stairways. While some parts of  
the building have changed mostly due to modernization (such as installation of AC units or updated  
electric lighting), the building as a whole has high integrity.

---

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our 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 or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☒ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

County and State

Architecture

Ethnic Heritage - Black

Social History

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

Criterion A - 1947-1968

Criterion C - 1904-1910

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1904

1910

1947

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Charles Webber Bolton

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Bethel Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
County and State

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Criterion A, Social History and Ethnic Heritage – Black:** Bethel Presbyterian Church of North Philadelphia was an important cultural site for urban life during the twentieth century and is locally significant in the areas of Social History and Ethnic Heritage – Black. While the building was originally built and occupied by a white congregation for 43 years, as Philadelphia’s demographics changed, so did the congregation. This transition from a white congregation to a Black congregation occurred under the leadership of Reverend Robert Lee Maffett, a strong advocate of civil rights. Rev. Maffett helped to create the North Philadelphia District Council, acted as Chaplain for the Philadelphia General Hospital, and worked to help poorer members of the community find housing and employment within the community. Rev. Maffett expected this level of activism from the congregation and used his pulpit to organize for local civil rights causes. The church became an important community center, offering youth services, sports leagues, and more. The Bethel Presbyterian Church’s congregation was made up of working-class African Americans and become a cornerstone to a depressed but vibrant community, left behind by white flight. The period of significance for Criterion A is from 1947, when the church transitioned to a Black congregation, to 1968, when the first Black pastor, Reverend Robert Lee Maffett, left the congregation.

**Criterion C, Architecture:** Bethel Presbyterian Church is a Late Gothic-Revival building, designed by Pennsylvania architect Charles W. Bolton and built by Philadelphia builder Burd P. Evans. Charles Bolton was one of the leading ecclesiastic architects in Philadelphia during the early twentieth century, and the building is the only known church in the region designed by Bolton and completed in the Gothic Revival style with an auditorium/Akron-plan. Bethel Presbyterian Church is a 120-year-old structure that is a well-preserved piece of architecture with few alterations made over those years. The period of significance for Criterion C extends from the church’s construction in 1904 to 1910 when the sabbath school was built.

The property meets Criteria Consideration A. Although it is a religious property, Bethel Presbyterian Church derives its significance from its associations with social trends in history and as an important example of the architectural work of Charles W. Bolton, not the history of religious practice at the location.

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

County and State

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **Founding and Construction of Bethel Presbyterian Church**

Bethel Presbyterian Church's history begins when a chapel was built on the site in 1891 and opened in 1892. The chapel was part of a mission outreach on Sunday evenings by Mutchmore Memorial Presbyterian Church (located at 18th Street and Montgomery Avenue). The name of the building was called the Memorial Collegiate Chapel (see Figure 1) and stood at 19th Street and York Street, most likely on the exact location of the present stone structure.<sup>5</sup> On December 30, 1899, this missionary endeavor prospered and was officially recognized under the name of Bethel Presbyterian Church. They installed their first pastor, Doctor Reverend David S. Clark, on January 23, 1900. Dr. Clark was an associate pastor at Mutchmore Memorial for ten years, preaching at Mutchmore Memorial in the afternoon and at the Memorial Collegiate Chapel in the evening.<sup>6</sup> In 1901, a building fund was started and in May 1904, ground was broken for the new church building. The building was designed in the Gothic Revival style, popular for churches of that era. They commonly include high style elements such as castle-like towers, parapets, and tracery windows, as well pointed Gothic arched windows and entries. On December 4, 1904, a dedication service was held for the sanctuary building. The architectural sketch on the program booklet (see Figure 2) shows that the attached sabbath school building was designed and planned at this time, even though it was not built until five years later.<sup>7</sup>

On February 24, 1907, a fire occurred in the neighboring dwelling on the south side, which crossed to the Bethel sanctuary building, ruining the original organ and producing serious damage to the building and its furnishings. In November 1907, there was a rededication of the complete repair of the building. The improvements added at this time were the installation of electric lights, copper roofing, a new organ, and stained-glass windows.<sup>8</sup> Three years later, the sabbath school building was built based on Bolton's original designs.

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth A. Hammonds, *Historical Directory of Presbyterian Churches and Presbyteries of Greater Philadelphia*, Presbyterian Historical Society, 1993.

<sup>6</sup> Mutchmore Presbyterian Church, *Archives of Mutchmore Presbyterian Church 1830-1984*, Presbyterian Historical Society Library.

<sup>7</sup> Bethel Presbyterian Church, "Dedicatory Service Bulletin of Bethel Presbyterian Church," December 4, 1904, Presbyterian Historical Society Library.

<sup>8</sup> Mutchmore, *Archives of Mutchmore Presbyterian Church 1830-1984*, Presbyterian Historical Society Library.

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

County and State



Figure 1 – Memorial Collegiate Chapel



Figure 2 – Architectural Design from Dedicatory Program Booklet

The industrialization that overtook large swaths of open land in North Philadelphia quickly attracted residential development as workers drawn to factory jobs came to settle in the region. This resurgence of growth in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, resulted in many new religious institutions in the neighborhoods. W.H. Gamble's 1887 *Plan of the City of Philadelphia*, shows blocks of homes and factories stretching into North Philadelphia. Hundreds of manufacturing and cottage industries scattered throughout North Philadelphia created the vast array of goods and supported the mercantile culture that earned Philadelphia the nickname "The Workshop of the World."<sup>9</sup> As a result of this growth, by the 1920s Bethel Presbyterian Church had over 400 members.<sup>10</sup>

### A New Congregation

Just decades after the church was built, the community began to change. Greater Philadelphia felt the impact of national and international events during two world wars and the Great Depression. Movements of people and industries signaled a new era. The surge of immigration from eastern and southern Europe that had begun in the late nineteenth century came to an end with the first World War and immigration quotas imposed in 1924. The region did not lack for newcomers, however, as the employment opportunities created during the world wars helped to spur the Great Migration of African Americans from the south. African Americans formed new communities in North Philadelphia and in other parts of

<sup>9</sup> Fredric Miller, "Still Philadelphia," 1983, Temple University Press, p. 73.

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth A Hammonds, *Historical Directory of Presbyterian Churches and Presbyteries of Greater Philadelphia*, 1993, Presbyterian Historical Society.

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

the city and region.<sup>11</sup> As early as 1930, it was noted in the school census of Philadelphia that white school-age children decreased by less than one percent, but Black children increased by eighty-four percent.<sup>12</sup>



Figure 3 – J. M. Brewer's Map of Philadelphia, 1934. Red marker is location of church. Red is "Colored," blue is Jewish, and no color is white. Source: Free Library of Philadelphia, Accessed July 9, 2025.

From 1940 to 1950 the Black population in Philadelphia rose from 250,000 to 375,000.<sup>13</sup> In the Philadelphia ward that Bethel resides, between 1920 and 1930, the African American population increased five-fold.<sup>14</sup> Also, not surprisingly, Philadelphia's total population doubled from 1890 to 1950.<sup>15</sup> The flow of Black migrants to Philadelphia "encountered a paradoxical mix of new opportunities and yet persistent and pervasive racial discrimination."<sup>16</sup> This happened "in both their employment, where most skilled, technical, and professional occupations were closed to African Americans, and housing, where racial barriers as well as the wartime housing shortage enabled landlords in Black neighborhoods to profit

<sup>11</sup> James Wolfinger, "African American Migration," 2013, *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*.

<sup>12</sup> William P. Shriver, *The Presbyterian Church in Metropolitan Philadelphia*, January 1930, Pennsylvania Historical Society.

<sup>13</sup> Ryanne Persinger, "They Followed the Railroad Tracks," February 5, 2019, *The Philadelphia Tribune*.

<sup>14</sup> Ken Finkel, "Roots of Hypersegregation in Philadelphia, 1920-1930," February 22, 2016, *The PhillyHistory Blog*.

<sup>15</sup> Boston University, "Philadelphia Population History," <https://physics.bu.edu/~redner/projects/population/cities/philadelphia.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Lee Maffett, "Maffett's Notes," October 20, 1940, Tuskegee Institute.

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

from doubling up families, subdividing apartments, and charging exorbitant rents for dilapidated housing units.”<sup>17</sup>

As the composition of the area became more African American, the white congregation members of Bethel were migrating outside the city. In 1945 they sought, with the Philadelphia Presbytery’s permission and blessing, to merge with Oxford Presbyterian Church on the Northwest boundary of Philadelphia. The White congregation sold the property at N. 19<sup>th</sup> and W. York Streets to the Philadelphia Presbytery in May 1947. Some other denominations in the area abandoned their buildings and the neighborhood, but the Presbytery of Philadelphia worked to find a solution for the people who were now living there. The Presbytery allowed a new ministry to start in the community of North Philadelphia. On June 27, 1948, the new Bethel Presbyterian Church was established in the now African American community with 78 Black members and five children. It began under the leadership of Reverend Robert Lee Maffett.



*Figure 4 – Service of Bethel Dedication in 1948, Maffett is pictured on the right*

**Criterion A, Social History and Ethnic Heritage – Black**

Like some of the transplants to the neighborhood, Rev. Robert Lee Maffett (1920 - 2011) was himself the son of a sharecropper. Maffett had left the farms of the south after working in the cotton fields of Alabama. He attended the Tuskegee Institute, received a Bachelor of Arts at Lincoln University, and a Master of Divinity at Western (now Pittsburgh) Theological Seminary.<sup>18</sup> While at Tuskegee as a young

<sup>17</sup> Temple University Libraries, “Civil Rights in a Northern City: Philadelphia,” *Why Philadelphia? Exhibit*. <https://exhibits.temple.edu/s/civil-rights-in-a-northern-city/page/why-philadelphia>.

<sup>18</sup> The Times Herald, “Robert Lee Maffett Obituary,” January 20, 2011.

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

man, he wrote that one of his commandments for himself was “to prove to the dominant race that the Negro race was no longer to be held as an inferior one, but one who means prosperity to the Nation as a whole.”<sup>19</sup> He stated in his memoirs that when he arrived in North Philadelphia, he was heartbroken to see teenagers gambling on the steps of the church building, which was closed to them. He took the church to them and brought the people in. During his leadership at Bethel, Rev. Maffett became an advocate for the African American community he served. He strived for equality in all aspects of the community, including within the church. He stated:

The White church has never faced realistically the growth of the Black population and the Black communities as it relates to mission expansion. The church in general thought it was compensating for its attitude and practice of racial superiority in Black communities by developing ‘mission stations’ and structuring them to be dependent upon its paternalistic ‘graces.’<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, Black communities in Philadelphia had been expanding since the mid-thirties and many congregations were changing.<sup>21</sup> This new congregation of Bethel Presbyterian Church was made up of domestics, food clerks, postal workers, maintenance workers, red caps on the railroad, teachers, and social workers. The membership grew steadily to 378 members. The choir was renowned and often gave concerts for the community. Florence Quivar, one of the church’s choir members since she was six years old, was an operatic mezzo-soprano. She went on to sing at the Metropolitan Opera more than 100 times and was considered one of the most prominent singers of her generation. She would give concerts at Bethel to raise money for the church.<sup>22</sup>



Figure 5 – Fifth Anniversary Banquet in sabbath school all-purpose room. June 21, 1954

<sup>19</sup> Zandra L. Maffett, provided letter from Robert L Maffett to Virginia Coker, October 20, 1940.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Lee Maffett, “Maffett’s Notes,” provided by Zandra Maffett.

<sup>21</sup> Temple University Libraries, “Civil Rights in a Northern City: Philadelphia,” *Why Philadelphia? Exhibit*. <https://exhibits.temple.edu/s/civil-rights-in-a-northern-city/page/why-philadelphia->

<sup>22</sup> Bethel Presbyterian Church, *20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bulletin of Bethel Presbyterian Church*, 1968.

Bethel Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
County and State

Rev. Maffett established and became the first president of the North Philadelphia District Council in 1958. One of the Council's goals was to keep taprooms out of the neighborhood. He led a group of 2,000 marchers against a taproom across the street from the church.<sup>23</sup> He also became involved for the fight for equal employment. In Maffett's notes he stated, "most blacks had to take whatever menial jobs they could find."<sup>24</sup> He realized that the big departments stores did not have any Black salesgirls in the early 60's and the Bell Telephone Company did not have any Black operators. "I was active in picketing department stores, confrontations with management, using diplomacy and persuasions to get black girls and women as clerks and telephone operators."<sup>25</sup> Meeting with the owners of the local phone lines, he was successful in getting the first Black operator for Bell Telephone Company hired.<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately for Black Philadelphians, their numbers grew as the city's economy declined. For generations a national industrial leader—especially in smaller craft occupations—Philadelphia lost textile, metal manufacturing, and electronic production jobs by the tens of thousands from the 1950s to the 1970s. Some of the jobs moved to foreign countries while others migrated to the suburbs. African Americans found that because of discriminatory housing practices, they could not follow the jobs to suburban Bucks and Montgomery counties, and they increasingly became locked in poor inner-city neighborhoods with no jobs and resources. Tensions between Black residents of the city and police had been escalating for several months over several well-publicized allegations of police brutality.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, unemployment ranged between 13 and 20 percent and was persistently high among young semi-skilled and unskilled workers. In addition, resentments and distrust between Black residents and police fed discontent in North Philadelphia and left many residents searching for an outlet for their frustrations. The Philadelphia race riot, or Columbia Avenue Riot, took place in the predominantly Black neighborhoods of North Philadelphia, eight blocks from Bethel. It occurred from August 28 to August 30, 1964. The neighborhood where Bethel resided had some of the worst housing and highest rates of unemployment and crime in the city.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Donald Writer, "2000 Outraged Citizens Push Fight to Block Taprooms at 20th & York," *The Philadelphia Tribune*, November 8, 1958.

<sup>24</sup> Robert Lee Maffett, "Maffett's Notes," provided by Zandra Maffett.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Lee Maffett, "Maffett's Notes," provided by Zandra Maffett.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Lee Maffett, "Maffett's Notes," provided by Zandra Maffett.

<sup>27</sup> James Wolfinger, "African American Migration," 2013, *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*.

<sup>28</sup> Temple University Libraries, "Civil Rights in a Northern City: Philadelphia," *The Columbia Avenue Riots, 1964 Exhibit*. <https://exhibits.temple.edu/s/civil-rights-in-a-northern-city/page/the-columbia-avenue-riots--1964>.

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Due to these conditions, Maffett was extremely invested in housing and health efforts in the community. Maffett stated, “as Whites continued to flee the area, we were able to get certain Blacks to buy their own houses. This became a part of my ministry helping poor people to find and have adequate jobs and housing.”<sup>29</sup> After Maffett left Bethel Presbyterian in 1968, he became the first Black Chaplain of Philadelphia General Hospital (PGH), the fifth largest hospital in the country. According to *The Philadelphia Tribune*, Maffett along with a Catholic priest established the first Department of Chaplaincy Services in 1971.<sup>30</sup> He fought tirelessly to keep PGH open for the people of North Philadelphia, while the state insisted it needed to be closed. As Maffett describes in his papers, “with the rapid growth of the private hospitals where the rich and the middle class could go for medical treatment, Philadelphia General Hospital became the poor man’s hospital.”<sup>31</sup> In February 1976, Maffett led 5,000 marchers up Chestnut Street to City Hall and asked for the recall of Mayor Frank Rizzo because of the closing of PGH. According to Maffett, the state did not care about the poor and needy, but he struggled daily for the cause—in this case to no avail.

While leading Bethel Presbyterian, Rev. Maffett spoke to his congregants weekly. His daughter, Zandra, recalls, “we were encouraged, expected to be activists – from the pulpit we learned of the local boycott of the week like AT&T or Shell gasoline that was discriminating against Blacks.”<sup>32</sup> Quoting Dr. J. Bernard Taylor, “Rev. Maffett was one of the giants of African American ministers in the Philadelphia Presbytery.”<sup>33</sup> Maffett had an ‘open door policy’ and the church would often be used for community meetings.<sup>34</sup> During and after Maffett’s leadership, Bethel Presbyterian Church continued to serve an important role in the community.

On June 19, 1960, Bethel Presbyterian Church dedicated what they called ‘The Bethel Center’ for use by the community, under the direction of William E. Johnson. In 1963, Rev. Herbert McClain took over that position and held it for many years with up to 300 youngsters. Rev. McClain would help to organize trips for the children, such as joint picnics with other churches on Bucks County farms. The floors in the basement of the sabbath school were hand waxed by the pastor for a basketball court, home to a community basketball team. There were also evening boxing matches that brought in revenue through

<sup>29</sup> Robert Lee Maffett, “Maffett’s Notes,” provided by Zandra Maffett, daughter of Robert Lee Maffett.

<sup>30</sup> *The Philadelphia Tribune*, “Ecumenical Chaplaincy Services at Philadelphia General,” November 30, 1971.

<sup>31</sup> Robert Lee Maffett, “Maffett Papers,” Presbyterian Historical Society.

<sup>32</sup> Zandra L. Maffett, email sent to Brian Reiff, June 6, 2024.

<sup>33</sup> Zandra L. Maffett, email sent to Brian Reiff, June 6, 2024.

<sup>34</sup> Gail Robinson, a 60+ year member of Bethel Presbyterian, interview with Brian Reiff, March 13, 2025.

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

ticket sales. It was also used as a mission center, generally by the community youth. It was home to many community activities including Scouting (Cub, Boy, Brownie, Girl), and other sporting events, academic classes and activities—all instrumental to the North Philadelphia community.<sup>35</sup> The Bethel Center continued to be used for many community activities, and the church was a consequential fixture in the social life of the neighborhood.



Figure 6 – Children playing in The Bethel Center with Rev McClain



Figure 7 – Children in Bethel Center's summer program

### Criterion C, Architecture

Bethel Presbyterian Church was designed by prominent architect, Charles Webber Bolton. Bolton was born in 1855 in Zelienople, Pennsylvania and became one of the leading ecclesiastic architects in Philadelphia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. By 1884, Bolton was already established as an architect in Philadelphia and continued his practice until his death. In addition to designing many churches in the greater Philadelphia area, Bolton's architectural designs for churches were published in the Presbyterian Church's Board of Church Erection Annual Reports. His church designs were also used for Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran, and Baptist churches. According to *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, Bolton is credited with designing more than 500 churches across the country.<sup>36</sup> Though known primarily as an ecclesiastic architect, he also occasionally designed other types of buildings. In later years, Bolton designed Brainerd Hall (now Hogg Hall) at Lafayette College.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Bethel Presbyterian Church, *20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bulletin of Bethel Presbyterian Church*, 1968.

<sup>36</sup> Sandra L Tatman, "Philadelphia Architects and Buildings," Charles Webber Bolton.

[https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/24058](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/24058).

<sup>37</sup> Philadelphia Architects and Buildings, "Charles Webber Bolton Projects." Accessed March 2025.

[https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/24058](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/24058).

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Episcopalians and others at the ritualistic end of the spectrum built their churches with high altars and a sanctuary in a longitudinal or cruciform plan. This separated the room from the clergy and the laity. Many Protestant churches broke with this familiar church design following the Civil War in the late nineteenth century. Bolton designed Bethel Presbyterian Church in the auditorium or Akron plan, a mainstream design of Protestant church architecture used primarily between 1880-1920. It created a more intimate setting for the congregation. The auditorium plan churches typically had a square sanctuary with fan-shaped seating with concentric, curved pews and a sloped floor towards the raised pulpit. Around the same time-period, many congregations were providing Sunday religious education. The Akron plan—pioneered in Akron, Ohio—created a flexible system for connecting the sanctuary with the education lecture hall using moveable doors. The plan also allowed smaller classrooms, usually around the lecture hall, to also be opened to the main hall.<sup>38</sup> The room height in Bethel's all-purpose room (also known as the lecture hall) allowed the classrooms on the second floor to be galleries complete with tiered floors. Bethel embodies all these architectural attributes. In addition to being in the auditorium form, the building was designed in the Gothic Revival style, popular for churches of that era. They commonly include high style elements such as castle-like towers, parapets, and tracery windows, as well as the pointed Gothic arched windows and entries.

Working from the database provided by *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings* of Bolton's churches from Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey, a survey was conducted of 27 churches in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware as comparable properties. The majority of these churches are Gothic Revival, Greek Revival, and Romanesque, all popular ecclesiastical styles during Bolton's most productive years. Of those, five are no longer standing, eight have been greatly renovated, seven are in good condition, and seven could not be found or verified as Bolton's. The First Methodist Episcopal Church in McKeesport, Pennsylvania is the only church of the 27 that is individually listed on the National Register. The building is late Gothic Revival and it is u-shaped around a grassy courtyard. According to the survey conducted for this nomination, there are no Bolton-designed churches in Philadelphia currently on the National Register. See the Additional Documentation section for the full list of comparable churches. Of the buildings surveyed, four were stone Gothic Revival buildings in a similar style to Bethel Presbyterian.<sup>39</sup> A brief summary of these churches is below.

<sup>38</sup> Bamberg, "Architecture Around Us," *Western Pennsylvania History*, Summer 2019, volume 102 number 2.

<sup>39</sup> Sandra L Tatman, "Philadelphia Architects and Buildings," Charles Webber Bolton, [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/24058](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/24058).

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Name of Property

*Oak Lane Presbyterian Church*

North 11<sup>th</sup> Street & Oak Lane, Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

County and State



Figure 8 – Oak Lane Presbyterian Church



Figure 9 – Oak Lane Presbyterian Church sanctuary

Oak Lane Presbyterian Church was built in 1902 and is also located in North Philadelphia.<sup>40</sup> The exterior design of the church building is almost identical to that of Bethel: with a corner tower with two main entry doors and two gabled-roofs and large stained-glass windows on each side. However, the design of the interior is significantly different from Bethel. Instead of auditorium style pews facing a corner chancel area, the church has straight pews with one main aisle. While the exterior of the building is very similar to Bethel, the interior was not designed in the Akron style and does not have the signature sliding doors that connect the sanctuary with the sabbath school. While the two churches share the same style, the interior is quite different.

*Rosedale Reformed (United Church of Christ) Church*  
1301 East Bellevue Avenue, Laureldale, PA (Berks County)



Figure 10 – Rosedale United Church of Christ

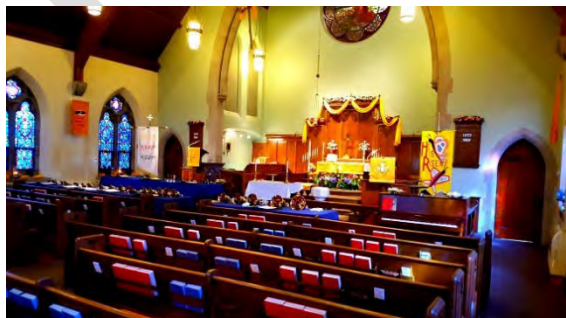


Figure 11 – Rosedale United Church of Christ Sanctuary

<sup>40</sup> The World Post Card Co “The Oak Lane Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia,” The Library Company of Philadelphia, Accessed July 7, 2025, <https://digital.librarycompany.org/islandora/object/digitool%3A97179#:~:text=Exterior%20view%20of%20church%20built,Street%20and%20Sixty%2Dsixth%20Avenue>

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

County and State

Rosedale Reformed (United Church of Christ) Church was built sometime between 1905 and 1915 in the then town of Rosedale. The church has a main tower like Bethel and the primary stone is also limestone. However, the church has one primary façade with two towers instead of a corner tower like Bethel. Like Oak Lane, the church has a more traditional interior seating arrangement with straight pews and center aisle. Additionally, there seems to have been changes to the alter and chancel in the later twentieth century that have affected interior integrity.

*St. Joan Reformed Church (now Jenkintown United Methodist Church)*  
328 Summit Avenue, Jenkintown, PA



Figure 12 – Jenkintown United Methodist Church



Figure 13 – Jenkintown United Methodist Sanctuary

St. Joan Reformed Church (now Jenkintown United Methodist Church) also has one primary façade that includes a tower, gable roof, and a large stained-glass window. The interior seating arrangement has straight pews, a center aisle, and chancel at the end of the nave. Many changes have been made to the interior woodwork and the main stained-glass window has been covered, lowering interior integrity.

*Bethany Reformed (United Church of Christ) Church*  
600 West Market Street, Bethlehem, PA



Figure 14 – Bethany United Church of Christ Church



Figure 15 – Bethany United Church of Christ Sanctuary

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

Bethany Reformed (United Church of Christ) Church was built in 1930 in Bethlehem. The church does not have a corner tower and has one primary street-facing façade unlike Bethel Presbyterian. While the interior retains integrity, like the other churches surveyed, the interior has straight pews and a center aisle.

While the four comparable Bolton churches were completed in similar architectural style—Gothic Revival—none of the churches had an auditorium-style interior configuration like Bethel Presbyterian Church. With the fan-shaped seating arrangement of concentric, curved pews, and a floor which slopes downward toward a raised pulpit platform at the northwest corner of the room, Bethel's interior sanctuary is a strong representative of the auditorium-style that was gaining popularity when the church was built. The sliding doors connecting the sanctuary to the sabbath school's lecture hall and balcony make Bethel an extremely intact representative of the Akron style plan. Not only were the four comparable churches not in the Akron style, not one of the 27 churches in the regional Bolton list could be substantiated as using an Akron plan.

### **Summary**

Not only was Charles Bolton one of the leading ecclesiastic architects in Philadelphia during the early twentieth century, but Bethel Presbyterian's interior seems to be a unique plan for the architect during this period of his life. The church is locally significant under Criterion C, Architecture as the only known church designed by Bolton completed in the Gothic Revival style with an Akron plan. Not only significant architecturally, Bethel Presbyterian Church is locally significant under Criterion A, Social History and Ethnic Heritage – Black. The church was an important cultural site for the community during the mid-twentieth century as the area shifted from a primarily white to primarily Black neighborhood. Led by local Civil Rights activist Robert Lee Maffett, Bethel was a consequential fixture in the social life of the neighborhood in the 1950s, 1960s, and beyond. 'The Bethel Center' was used for many community activities including recreation, education, and activism during and after Rev. Maffett's tenure. Bethel Presbyterian Church remains an important fixture in its North Philadelphia community, continuing to provide many of the same services in the building today.

---

## **9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Amott, David. "*The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia, North Philadelphia.*" 2024.

Bamberg, Angelique. "Architecture Around Us." *Western Pennsylvania History*. Summer 2019; volume

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Name of Property

102, Number 2.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

County and State

“Bethany United Church of Christ Church.” Photo of exterior and sanctuary Bethlehem, PA.  
[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).

Bethel Presbyterian Church. “Dedicatory Service Bulletin of Bethel Presbyterian Church.” December 4, 1904. Presbyterian Historical Society Library.

Bethel Presbyterian Church. “Dedicatory Services Program Booklet.” May 29 – June 5, 1910. Bethel Presbyterian Sabbath School.

Bethel Presbyterian Church. “20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bulletin of Bethel Presbyterian Church.” 1968.

Boston University. “Philadelphia Population History.” <https://physics.bu.edu/~redner/projects/population/cities/philadelphia.html>.

Finkel, Ken. “Roots of Hypersegregation in Philadelphia, 1920-1930.” February 22, 2016. The PhillyHistory Blog. <https://blog.phillyhistory.org/index.php/2016/02/roots-of-hypersegregation-in-philadelphia-1920-1930/>

Fox, David H. “The Organs Of C. S. Haskell, Inc.” *The Organ Historical Society*. Volume 29, Number 4, (1986). 17-26.

Google Maps. “Satellite Imagery of area surrounding Bethel Presbyterian Church.” Accessed December 2024. <https://shorturl.at/S7qU0>.

Hammonds, Kenneth A.. “*Historical Directory of Presbyterian Churches and Presbyteries of Greater Philadelphia*.” Presbyterian Historical Society. 1993.

“Jenkintown United Methodist Church exterior.” Jenkintown, PA. Jenkintown United Methodist Church Facebook Group. Accessed May 2025. [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).

“Jenkintown United Methodist Church sanctuary and pastor.” Glenside Local. Jenkintown, PA. Accessed May 2025. [www.glensidelocal.com](http://www.glensidelocal.com).

“J. M. Brewer's Map of Philadelphia, North Section, 1934.” Free Library of Philadelphia Digital Collections. Accessed July 9, 2025. <https://libwww.freelibrary.org/digital/item/16714>.

Maffett, Robert Lee. “*Maffett’s Notes*.” October 20, 1940. Tuskegee Institute.

Maffett, Robert Lee. “*Maffett’s Notes*.” provided by Zandra Maffett.

Maffett, Rev. Robert Lee. “*Maffett Papers*.” Presbyterian Historical Society.

Maffett, Zandra L. provided letter from Robert L Maffett to Virginia Coker. October 20, 1940.

Maffett, Zandra L. email sent to Brian Reiff, June 6, 2024.

Miller, Fredric. “*Still Philadelphia*.” Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983.

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

County and State

Mutchmore Presbyterian Church. "*Archives of Mutchmore Presbyterian Church 1830-1984.*"  
Presbyterian Historical Society Library.

"Oak Lane Presbyterian Church." Photo of exterior and sanctuary. Philadelphia, PA. Accessed May 2025.  
[www.oaklanepresbyterian.org](http://www.oaklanepresbyterian.org).

Persinger, Ryanne. "They Followed the Railroad Tracks." *The Philadelphia Tribune*. February 5, 2019.

Philadelphia Architects and Buildings. "Charles Webber Bolton Projects." Accessed March 2025.  
[https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/24058](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/24058).

The Philadelphia Inquirer. "*Will Dedicate New Church Next Week.*" November 26, 1904.

The Philadelphia Tribune. "*Ecumenical Chaplaincy Services at Philadelphia General.*" November 30, 1971.

Robinson, Gail, a 60+ year member of Bethel Presbyterian, interview with Brian Reiff. March 13, 2025.

"Rosedale United Church of Christ." Photo of exterior and sanctuary. Laureldale, PA. Accessed May 2025.  
[www.rosedaleucc.org](http://www.rosedaleucc.org).

Shriver, William P.. "*The Presbyterian Church in Metropolitan Philadelphia.*" January 1930.  
Pennsylvania Historical Society.

Tatman, Sandra. "Philadelphia Architects and Buildings." Charles Webber Bolton.  
[https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/24058](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/24058).

Temple University Libraries. "*Civil Rights in a Northern City: Philadelphia.*" Why Philadelphia?  
Exhibit. <https://exhibits.temple.edu/s/civil-rights-in-a-northern-cit/page/why-philadelphia->

Temple University Libraries. "*Civil Rights in a Northern City: Philadelphia.*" The Columbia Avenue  
Riots, 1964. <https://exhibits.temple.edu/s/civil-rights-in-a-northern-cit/page/the-columbia-avenue-riots--1964->

The Times Hearld, "Robert Lee Maffett Obituary," January 20, 2011.

Wolfinger, James. "*African American Migration,*" 2013. The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia.

Writer, Donald. "*2000 Outraged Citizens Push Fight to Block Taprooms at 20th & York.*" The  
Philadelphia Tribune, November 8, 1958.

---

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

Bethel Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
County and State

\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

\_\_\_\_ State Historic Preservation Office  
\_\_\_\_ Other State agency  
\_\_\_\_ Federal agency  
\_\_\_\_ Local government  
\_\_\_\_ University  
\_\_\_\_ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Approximately .18 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 39.990290 | Longitude: -75.163840 |
| 2. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 3. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 4. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927    or    ☐ NAD 1983

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Bounded by West York Street on the northeast side, North 19<sup>th</sup> Street on the southeast side, and North Garnet Street on the northwest side.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Bethel Presbyterian Church property was and is on the corner of West York Street, North 19<sup>th</sup> Street, and North Garnet Street at 1900 West York Street during the periods of significance.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Brian E Reiff

organization: Doylestown Presbyterian Church, Bethel Presbyterian Church Advisory Board

street & number: 625 Spring Valley Road

city or town: Doylestown state: PA zip code: 18901

e-mail: bereiff@aol.com

telephone: 215-348-9293

date: 12/1/2024

---

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)



Bethel Presbyterian Church

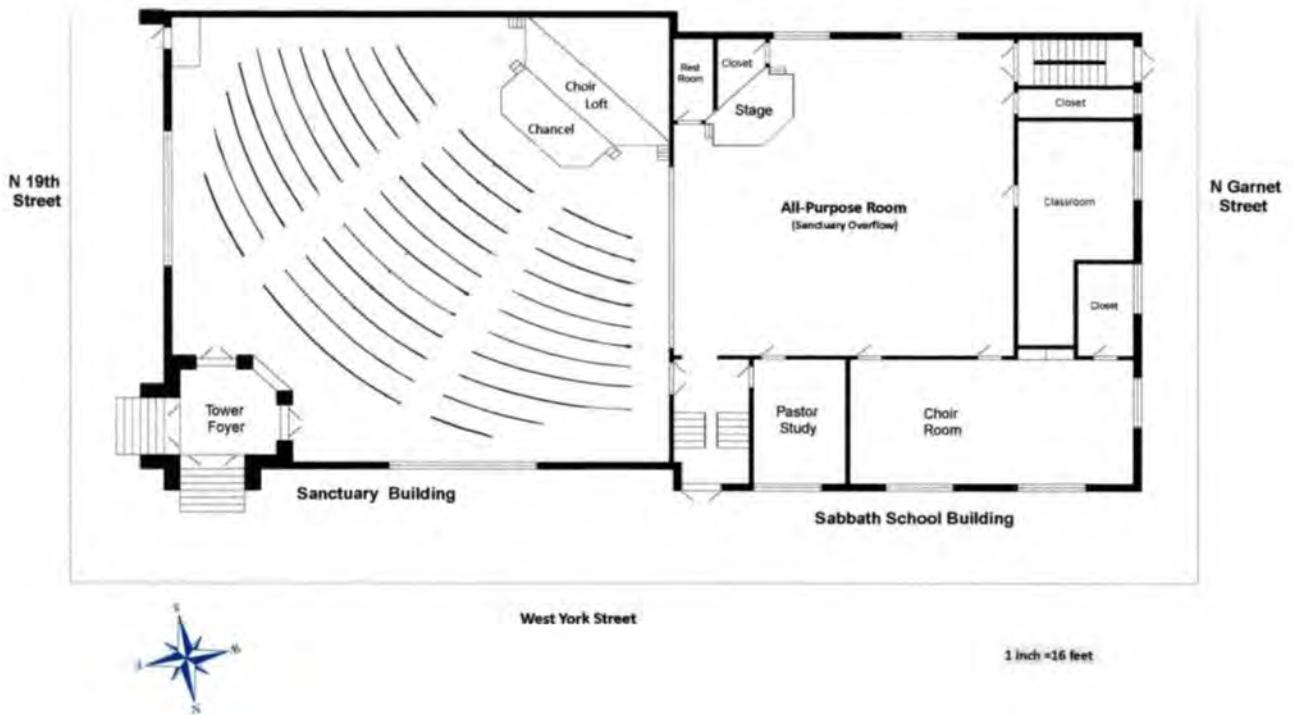
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

**Plan of Church**

*Figure 17: Floor Plan of First Floor*



Bethel Presbyterian Church

Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

County and State

# Survey of Charles Bolton Churches

Figure 18: Table of surveyed churches designed by Charles Bolton

Historic Name	Current Name	Street Address	Cty	State	Comments	Year Built Style	Material	PA SHARE	NR Status
Frankford Baptist	Mizpah Seventh Day Adventist	4355 Paul Street	Philadelphia	PA	Extant with many original architectural details	Rebuilt 1897 Greek Revival	Brick		
Scotts Presbyterian Church		Broad & Castle Streets	Philadelphia	PA	Demolished in 1955	1888			
Calvary Baptist Church		2375 Shore Road	South Seaville	NJ	Extant with modern alterations	1889 Greek Revival	Frame		
West Park Presbyterian	Resurrection Baptist	5401-5411 Lansdowne Ave	Philadelphia	PA	Extant with some renovations	c. 1895 Romanesque	Stone		
Hopewell Presbyterian Church		1300 S 33rd Street	Philadelphia	PA	Extant, partial remove of steeple and removal of stained glass	1898 Romanesque	Stone		
Tioga Presbyterian Church		3501 N 17th St.	Philadelphia	PA	Extant, with major renovations 1922	1898 Romanesque	Stone		
Trinity Evangelical Church		28 E Arch Street	Shamokin	PA	Extant with major renovations	1898 Romanesque	Brick		
Westminster Presbyterian		Green & Reily Streets	Harrisburg	PA	Demolished	1898			
Presbyterian Church		N/A	Bala Cynwyd	PA	Not found	1901			
Fifth Presbyterian Church		3rd & Tilghman	Chester	PA	Demolished	1904		1981 RED0501	Listed
First Baptist Church		N/A	Coatesville	PA	Not found	1906			
First Presbyterian Church	United Presbyterian Church	100 E 5th Street	Mount Carmel	PA	Extant with many original architectural details	1907 Romanesque	Stone		
Diamond Street Baptist		31 st St near Diamond	Philadelphia	PA	Demolished	ca. 1907		1995 RET15330	Undetermined
J. Addison Harper Mem. Presbyterian		65th Ave near Lansdowne	Lansdowne Twp	PA	Not found	1911			
Henry Memorial Presbyterian		6441-6449 Lansdowne Ave	Philadelphia	PA	Demolished	c. 1911			
Union Baptist		1910 Fitzwater St	Philadelphia	PA	Extant	c. 1913 Gothic	Stone		
Alpha Baptist Church	First Spanish Baptist Church	2341 Hancock Street	Philadelphia	PA	Extant with many original architectural details	1915 Gothic Revival	Stone		
St Paul Reformed Church	St Paul UCC Church	330 E Hamilton Hamilton St.	Allentown	PA	Extant with major renovations	No clear	Stucco		
Dover Presbyterian Church		54 S State Street	Dover	DE	Extant with many original architectural details	1916 architectural	Brick		
Gloria Lutheran		7th St. near Northeast Ave	Philadelphia	PA	Not found	1923			
First M.E. Church	First United Methodist Church	1406 Cornell Street	McKeesport	PA	Extant with many original architectural details	Gothic Revival, 1924 High Style	Stone		
Rosedale Reformed Church	Rosedale UCC	1301 E Bellevue Ave	Laureldale Borough	PA	Extant with many original architectural details	1928 Greek Revival	Stone		
Bethany Reformed	Bethany UCC Church	600 West Market Street	Bethlehem	PA	Extant with many original architectural details	1930 Gothic Revival	Stone		
West Side Presbyterian	Canaan Baptist	5430-5444 Pulaski Ave	Philadelphia	PA	Beautiful	c. 1930 High Style	Stone		
St. Joan Reformed Church	Jenkintown United Methodist	328 Summitolive	Jenkintown	PA	Extant with some renovations	1936 Greek Revival	Stone		
St. Matthew A.M.E. Church		215 North 57th Street	Philadelphia	PA	Extant with some renovations	c. 1940 Greek Revival	Stone		
Oak Lane Presbyterian		6637 North 11th Street	Philadelphia	PA	Extant with many original architectural details	1891-1892 Greek Revival	Stone	2017 REC00791	Undetermined

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

County and State

## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

## Photo Log

Name of Property: Bethel Presbyterian Church

City or Vicinity: Philadelphia

County: Philadelphia State: PA

Photographer: Brian E Reiff

Date Photographed: 2023 – 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and Figure(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

## Photo Log

1. Northeast corner of sanctuary building with a view of the sabbath school facing southwest
2. East facade of sanctuary building facing west
3. Detail of east tower doors featuring original stonework facing south
4. Northwest corner of sabbath school facing southeast
5. Sanctuary looking southeast
6. Sanctuary pews, pulpit platform, and hanging metal lighting facing southwest
7. Sanctuary woodwork and cherub facing south to right of chancel
8. Sanctuary wood and glass folding doors facing west
9. Sanctuary window "Christ, the Good Shepherd" facing east
10. Sanctuary window "Mary, and the Infant Child" facing north
11. Interior bell tower door facing south
12. Exterior bell tower door facing east from inside narthex
13. Sabbath school room in second floor of bell tower
14. Sanctuary basement level Fellowship Hall facing southeast
15. Sabbath school basement level
16. Sabbath school all-purpose room with stage and galleries facing northeast
17. Choir room under balcony on north side of sabbath school building facing northwest
18. Sabbath school balcony west side facing north

Bethel Presbyterian Church

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Name of Property

County and State

19. Sabbath school building stairway on west corner of building facing southeast
20. Front door of the sanctuary building tower on northeast side from W. York Street facing south

## Figure Log

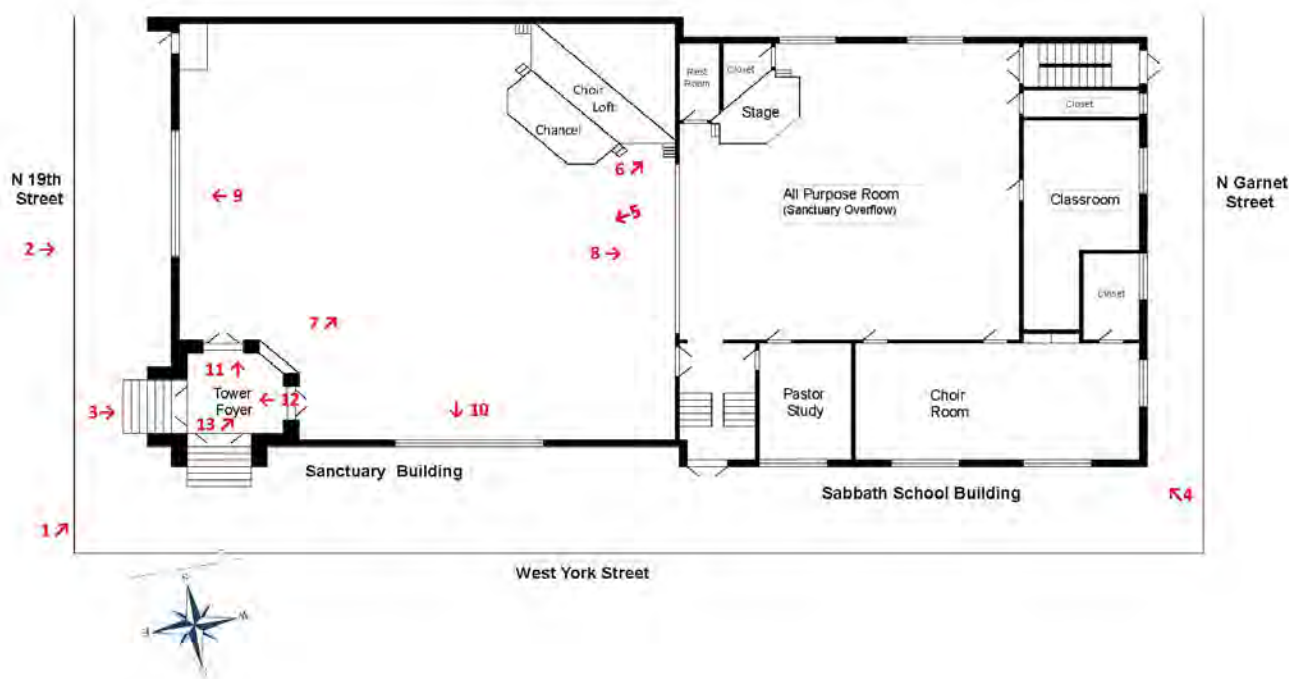
1. Memorial Collegiate Chapel, approximate date 1891. Source: Presbyterian Historical Library
2. Architectural Design from Bethel Dedicatory Program Booklet. Source: *Philadelphia Inquirer* November, 26, 1904
3. J. M. Brewer's Map of Philadelphia, 1934. Source: Free Library of Philadelphia, Accessed July 9, 2025.
4. Service of Bethel Dedication in 1948, Maffett is pictured on the right. Source: Bethel photos
5. Fifth Anniversary Banquet in sabbath school all-purpose room, June 21, 1954. Source: Bethel photos
6. Children playing a game in The Bethel Center. Source: Bethel photos
7. Children in Bethel Center's summer program. Source: Bethel photos
8. Oak Lane Presbyterian Church exterior, Philadelphia, PA. Source: oaklanepresbyterian.org
9. Oak Lane Presbyterian Church sanctuary, Philadelphia, PA. Source: oaklanepresbyterian.org
10. Rosedale United Church of Christ exterior, Laureldale, PA. Source: rosedaleucc.org
11. Rosedale United Church of Christ sanctuary, Laureldale, PA. Source: rosedaleucc.org
12. Jenkintown United Methodist Church exterior, Jenkintown, PA. Source: facebook.com
13. Jenkintown United Methodist Church sanctuary and pastor, Jenkintown, PA. Source: glensidelocal.com
14. Bethany United Church of Christ Church exterior, Bethlehem, PA. Source: facebook.com
15. Bethany United Church of Christ sanctuary, Bethlehem, PA. Source: facebook.com
16. Aerial views of the Bethel property showing surrounding residential neighborhood. Source: Google
17. Floor plan of main floor at Bethel. Source: Brian Reiff
18. Table of surveyed churches designed by Charles Bolton. Source: Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Project
19. Photo map of main floor at Bethel. Source: Brian Reiff
20. Photo map of sanctuary building basement at Bethel. Source: Brian Reiff
21. Photo map of sabbath school building – first & second floors. Source: Brian Reiff
22. Photo map of sabbath school building – basement. Source: Brian Reiff

Bethel Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
County and State

Figure 19: Photo Map – Sanctuary Building

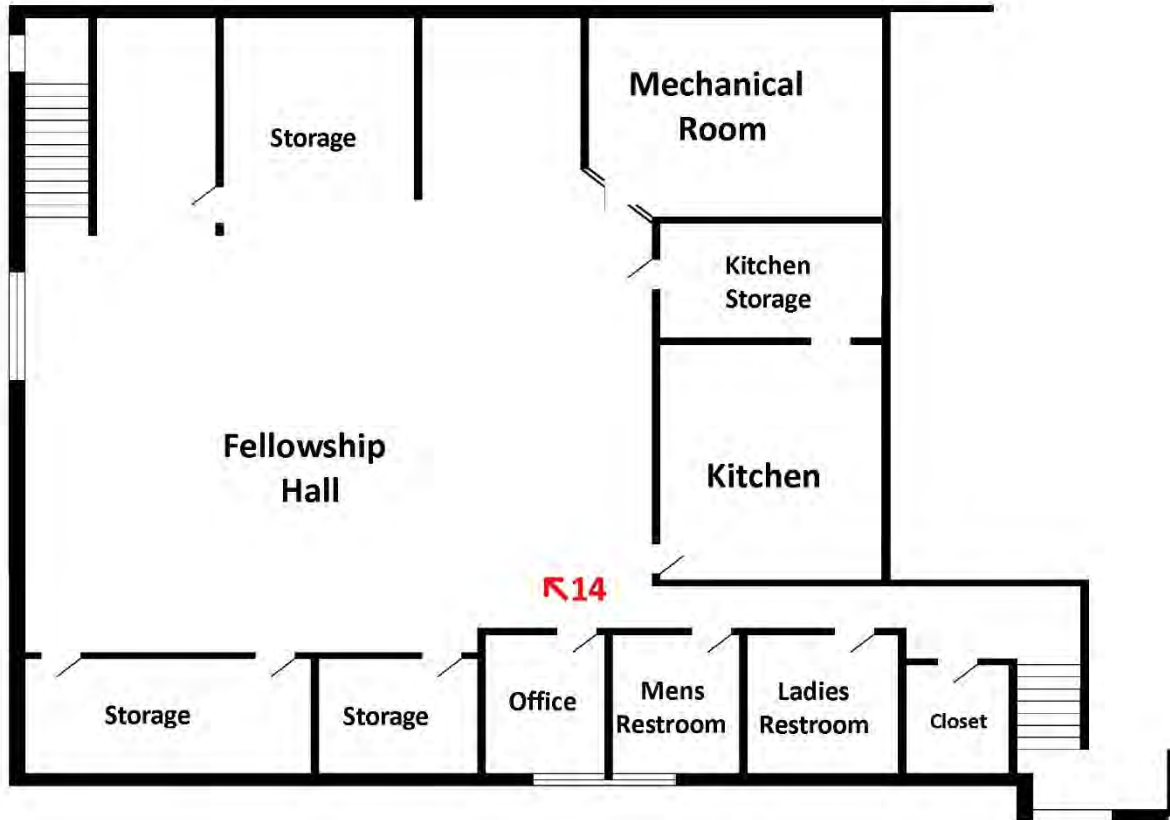
Red numbers are corresponding to the photo log and direction photos were taken



Bethel Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
County and State

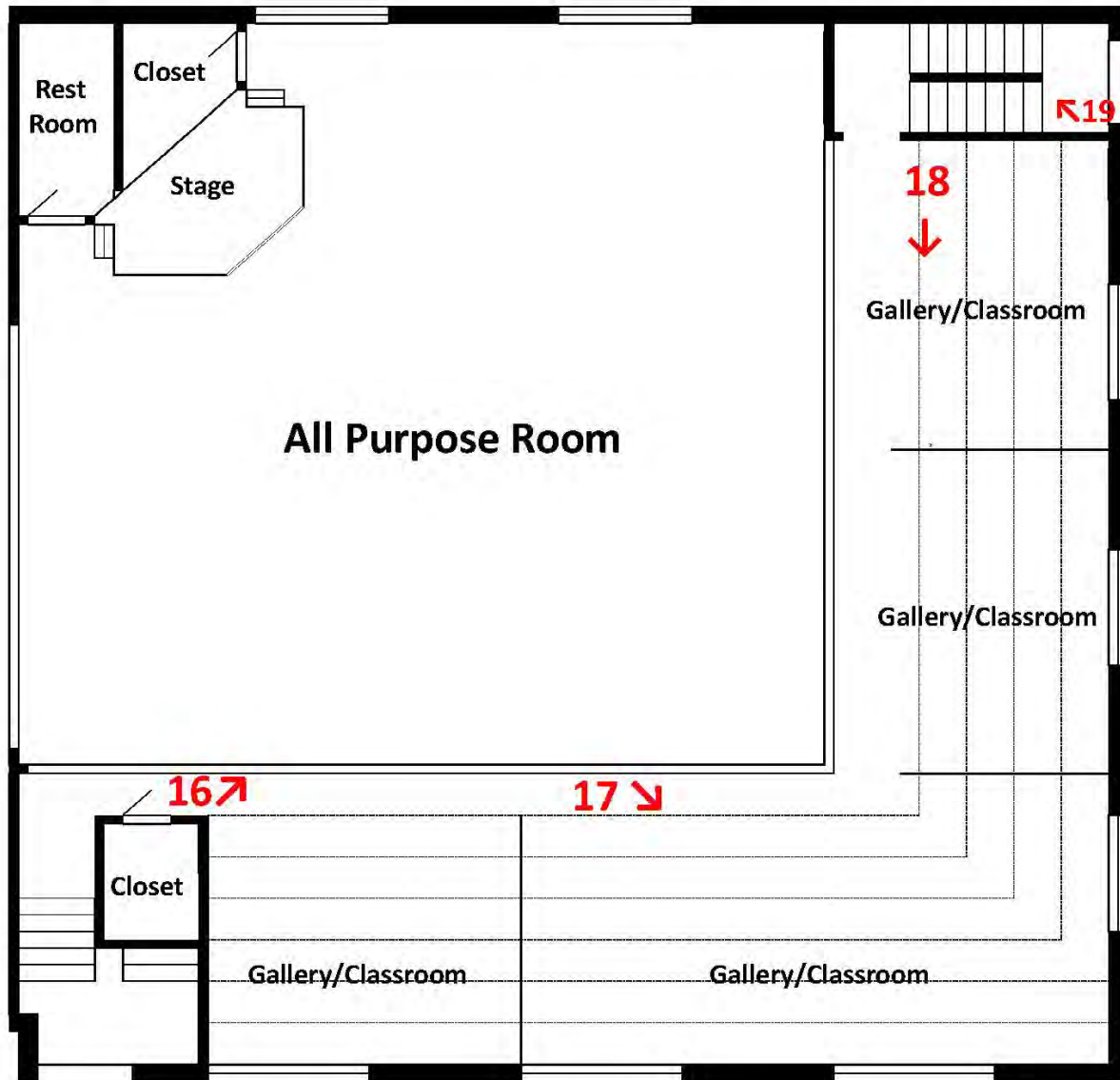
*Figure 20: Photo Map – Sanctuary Building Basement*



Bethel Presbyterian Church  
Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
County and State

*Figure 21: Photo Map – Sabbath School Building – First & Second Floors*



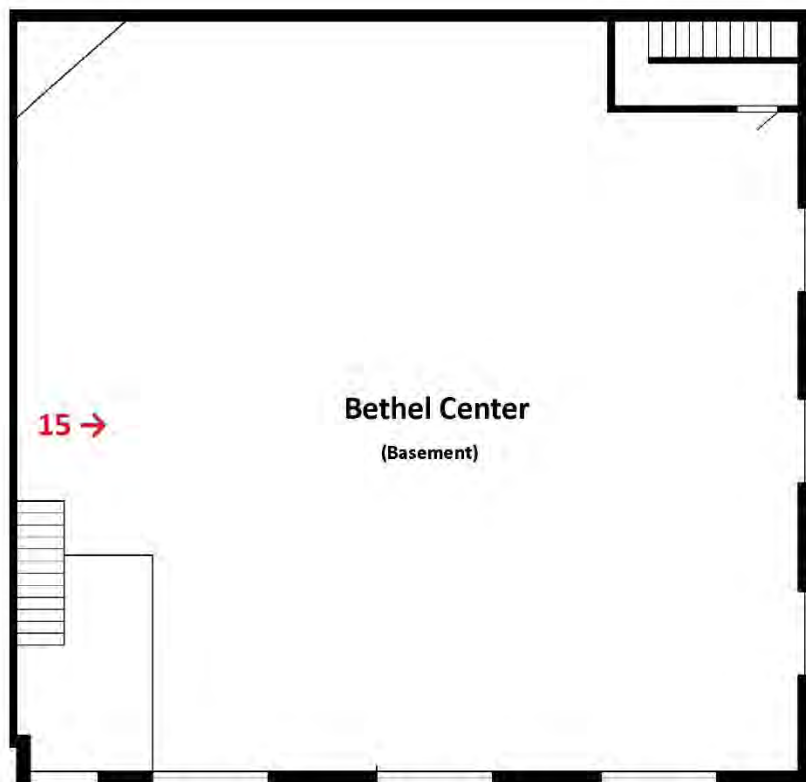
Bethel Presbyterian Church

Name of Property

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

County and State

*Figure 22: Photo Map – Sabbath School Building - Basement*



**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.