

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

001

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Fletcher Chapel
other names/site number Church of God and Saints of Christ

2. Location

street & number 401 New York Avenue, N.W. not for publication N/A
city or town Washington vicinity N/A
state District of Columbia code DC zip code 20001 county N/A code N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally statewide locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Henry Cron 5/30/97
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	entered in the National Register (See continuation sheet).	<u>Patrick Andrews</u>	<u>5/14/97</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	determined eligible for National Register (See continuation sheet).		
<input type="checkbox"/>	determined not eligible for the National Register		
<input type="checkbox"/>	removed from the National Register		
<input type="checkbox"/>	other (explain):		

Signature of 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
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Cat: RELIGION Sub: religious facility

Current Functions

Cat: RELIGION Sub: religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

MID-19th CENTURY

Materials

- foundation _____
- roof ASPHALT
- walls STUCCO
- other WOOD (trim)

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 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 a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1854-1868

Significant Dates 1868

Significant Person _____

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	326140	4308000	3	_____
2	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stephen Callcott / Architectural Historian
organization D.C. Historic Preservation Division date February 1997
street & number 614 H Street, NW, Room 305 telephone (202) 727-7360
city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20001

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Church of God and Saints of Christ
street & number 3927 Bridge Road telephone _____
city Suffolk state VA zip code 23435

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications 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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013 -7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024 -0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section 7 Page 1 Fletcher Chapel
Name of property
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County and State

Fletcher Chapel, located at the northwest corner of 4th Street and New York Avenue, N.W., is a modest one story frame building measuring approximately 26' wide x 43' long. The building is three bays wide and four bays deep and is clad in stucco and capped by an asphalt shingle roof. All windows on the building are one-over-one wood sash. The front facade is oriented south facing New York Avenue; the east side elevation faces 4th Street. The building was constructed between 1854-1857.

On the front facade, the building has a round-headed door opening in the center bay with a flat wood surround punctuated by a wood keystone. The two windows flanking the central door are also round-headed, enframed with wide wood surrounds and punctuated by wood keystones. The front pediment has a round bullseye window and eaves which retain their original brackets.

Historic photographs of the building reveal that the side and rear walls were originally clad in vertical board and batten siding. The front facade was originally finished with horizontal clapboards, and had ashlar detailing at the front corners. These wood finishes and details remain under the stucco, which was added in 1946. Some of the brackets in the cornice, identical to those still found in the pediment eaves, are missing. Historic photographs also indicate that the original windows were six-over-six and were shuttered on the side facades, and that the original roof was standing seam metal. These features were changed prior to 1939.

The front four feet of the building -- that which was finished with horizontal clapboards and included the corner ashlar detailing -- was enclosed in 1868. The front extension served to enclose the entry steps up to the sanctuary of the building. The original appearance of the building, as it appeared between 1854-1868, is unknown, but may have been finished in board and batten siding as was found on the side elevations.

A shed addition measuring approximately 15' x 15' extending off the back of the structure was added in 1953, and houses a small bathroom and kitchen. The addition is not a significant feature of the building.

New brick steps leading up to the front door were added in 1995.

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Section 8 Page 1 Fletcher Chapel
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Fletcher Chapel, 1854-1906

Fletcher Chapel, located at 401 New York Avenue, N.W., was constructed between 1854-1857 as a mission church of the McKendree Methodist Church. McKendree was established in the 1840s, and had its beginnings in a hall above the Northern Liberties Market at 8th and K Streets, N.W. Its Sunday School was formed on June 7, 1844, with teachers recruited from the parishioners of Foundry and Wesley Chapel Stations. McKendree's first church building was constructed in 1845 on Massachusetts Avenue, just west of 9th Street, N.W. McKendree was a leading Methodist congregation in the mid-1800s, and was visited by Presidents James K. Polk, James Buchanan and Andrew Johnson. McKendree remained on Massachusetts Avenue until June 23, 1872, at which time it relocated to its present location at 24th Street and South Dakota Avenue, N.E.

In 1853, less than a decade after its founding, McKendree established Fletcher Chapel as a mission church, with pastors assigned by McKendree's pastor. The Chapel building itself was constructed sometime between 1854-1857. Tax assessment records indicate that the property was unimproved in 1854, and owned by a Z.D. Gilman. The first account of the building appears in *Churches and Pastors of Washington, D.C.*, written in 1857 by Lorenzo Johnson, in which the church is both mentioned and a description of the building is given. The building first appears in the city's tax records in 1859, and indicates that the property was owned by Fletcher Chapel.

For the first ten years of operation, the neighborhood around the chapel remained sparsely developed and somewhat isolated. The area around 4th and New York Avenue was on the fringes of the developed city, with only scattered detached houses and a few rowhouses. However, after the Civil War, the surrounding blocks quickly developed into an urban neighborhood as German, Italian and Irish immigrants and recently-freed African-Americans moved into the area. By 1868, the congregation of Fletcher Chapel had grown to eighty people, and the chapel had gained independent status from its parent church. An account in the *National Intelligencer* of the same year describes alterations that were made to the front of the church which extended its front facade out by four feet, enclosing its front steps. The appearance of the church prior to this time is unknown.

In the 1890s, Fletcher Chapel was the host of several meetings important to the founding of the national temperance movement. On June 23, 1893, over fifty delegates representing numerous churches from throughout the city met to form a single organization for the purpose of enforcing and strengthening

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restrictive liquor laws. At the meeting, the delegates elected Major S.H. Walker, a Methodist Episcopalian layman as their president, and accepted Walker's motion that the nascent organization be named the "Anti-Saloon League of the District of Columbia." Out of this meeting, the group was to grow into a national organization through the 1910s. By 1916, the Anti-Saloon League was responsible for dry laws in 24 states, achieved through political lobbying and the influence of the clergy. The organization's ultimate success was in persuading Congress to ratify the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, which established a national prohibition on the sale and distribution of alcohol in 1920. The organization survives today, with a somewhat different focus, as the American Council on Alcohol Problems.

By the turn of the century, the surrounding neighborhood was experiencing significant change in its racial and economic make up. Increasingly, the whites who attended Fletcher Chapel were moving out of the inner city to the newer suburban communities on the city's edge. African-Americans migrating to Washington from the rural south, as well as other immigrant groups, populated the city's close-in, older neighborhoods. In 1899, Fletcher Chapel's membership had dropped to below forty people and its independent status was revoked. The church became a charge of the Wesley Chapel. Membership continued to drop into the first decade of the new century, and the church was finally offered for sale in 1905.

The church was sold in 1906 to the Church of God and Saints, an independent African-American church organized and established in 1898 by William Saunders Crowdy. The reuse of Fletcher Chapel by an African-American congregation reflected a broader trend at the turn of the century, as blacks increasingly purchased existing houses in the inner city, and began to create an important, and in many ways, independent community. The early 20th century was an extremely vibrant period for the African-American community in Washington, as businesses, educational institutions, entertainment facilities, and religious, fraternal and social organizations founded by and for blacks flourished in the face of intense racial segregation and discriminatory Jim Crow laws. The neighborhood which includes Fletcher Chapel, extending from the northern edge of downtown and including LeDroit Park and the 14th and U Streets area (today known as Shaw), was the residential and business center for African-Americans in the segregated era. The M Street High School, one of the first African-American public high schools in the country and a leading force in the education of blacks in Washington until the 1950s, is located only a block away from Fletcher Chapel.

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The Church of God and Saints of Christ

The Church of God and Saints of Christ was organized on November 8, 1896 in Emporia, Kansas by Prophet William Saunders Crowdy. Crowdy was born into slavery on August 11, 1847 at Charlotte Hall, Saint Mary's County, Maryland. At the age of 16, Crowdy escaped slavery and joined the Union Army as a soldier during the Civil War. He was one of approximately 200,000 African-American men inspired by the possibility of freedom who joined the fight.

Following his tour of duty and after a time in various other locations, Crowdy settled with his family on a homestead near Guthrie, Oklahoma Territory. He acquired approximately 160 acres in September 1891 as part of the Federal Homestead Law, and became a successful farmer. However, like virtually all African-Americans in the post-Reconstruction period, Crowdy soon learned that freedom from slavery did not result in an end to racial prejudice and inequality.

The response of organized religion to the plight of African-Americans was one which reflected the thinking of the period. C. Eric Lincoln, in *Race, Religion and the Continuing American Dilemma*, captures this when he wrote,

...American Christianity never did imply a presumption of racial equality for Blacks, whether social, political, or spiritual....Morally, the Black Christian was simply expected to do the best he could with his limited capacity. God and society would forgive him his failures so long as he kept the place assigned him in the socio-political structure.

The Great Awakening which occurred in the late 18th century and continued through the early 19th century aroused a new spiritual consciousness in both blacks and whites. This heightened awareness permitted a level of acceptance and involvement for all human beings. Revivals and camp meetings were common, and African-Americans began to develop a distinctly black church. There was a tremendous ripple effect which saw a proliferation of black churches throughout the South. The emancipation of the enslaved and the need to belong to an accepting religious body which did not discriminate was an alluring feature of the new black churches. In Crowdy's mind, however, something was missing. There was no institutionalized religious body within the African-American community rooted in the Hebraic tradition. During this time, Crowdy received in a revelation the command to establish the Church of God and Saints of Christ.

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Over a span of twelve years, Crowdy built a religious organization with tabernacles in many western cities and eventually migrated to Philadelphia, where the general headquarters for the organization was established around the turn of the century. Many businesses were established, owned and operated by the congregation, including a publishing house, restaurant, dry goods store, barber shop, and a home for the elderly. In 1903, Crowdy moved to Washington, D.C., attracted by the city's growing African-American population. After holding services in several locations, the congregation purchased its present site, Fletcher Chapel, on August 22, 1906. William Crowdy, John W. Dickerson and Ebenezer B. Williams were elected as the original trustees. The Church of God and Saints of Christ continues to have tabernacles in many states throughout the United States, the West Indies, South and Central America, as well as the District of Columbia. Headquarters for the organization today are located in Suffolk, Virginia.

Architecture

While modest in size and detail, Fletcher Chapel shows the influence of the romantic, picturesque style of building made popular by the publications of Andrew Jackson Downing. Downing's widely reproduced books, including *Cottage Residences* (1842) and *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850), with handsome perspective illustrations showing houses in naturalistic landscapes, helped turn popular opinion away from the formal, classically-derived Greek Revival style toward the more picturesque Gothic and Italianate styles. Downing specifically recommended the use of vertical board and batten siding, as was originally found on this building, because of its durability and expression of strength. Fletcher Chapel also exhibits the brackets and robust round-arched window and door openings on the front facade with wide unadorned surrounds which typified Downing's designs. The building is a rare example of architecture in the District of Columbia influenced by Downing's design ideas.

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Section 9 Page 1 Fletcher Chapel
Name of property
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County and State

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Caldwell, Curtis. *A History of the Church of God and Saints of Christ*. Unpublished narrative, 1997. Copy located at D.C. Historic Preservation Division.
- Don't Tear It Down. *Mount Vernon East Survey*. Unpublished neighborhood historic resources survey and narrative final report, 1983. Copy located at D.C. Historic Preservation Division.
- Downing, Andrew Jackson. Victorian Cottage Residences [a reprint of various Downing publications]. New York: Dover Publications, 1981.
- Fletcher Chapel. Nomination form to the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites, 1996. Copy located at D.C. Historic Preservation Division.
- Washingtoniana Division, Martin Luther King Memorial Library. Photographic files
- Washingtoniana Division, Martin Luther King Memorial Library. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1900-present.

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Section 10 Page 1 **Fletcher Chapel**
Name of property
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Verbal Boundary Description:

The building is located at 401 New York Avenue, N.W. at the northwest corner of 4th Street and New York Avenue. The building is located within Square 514 on lot 800.

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 97000834 Date Listed: 8/14/97

Fletcher Chapel DC
Property Name: County: State:

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick Andrus
Signature of the Keeper

9/5/97
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

The nomination form has checked National Register Criterion A, but no associated Area of Significance was included. "Social History" is added as an Area of Significance to reflect the chapel's local historical importance. Also, the Period of Significance is extended to 1905 to include the time period when the chapel was the center of activity regarding the temperance movement.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)