

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Section number _____ Page _____

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 100002065

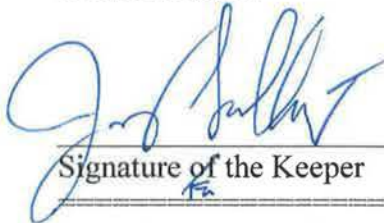
Date Listed: 2/1/2018

Property Name: Bethlehem Presbyterian Church

County: Alachua

State: FL

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.



Signature of the Keeper

2-1-2018

Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8: Criteria / Area(s) of Significance

Criterion A is hereby deleted as is Exploration/Settlement as an area of significance.

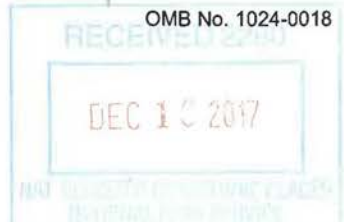
The documentation for the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, while providing historical information about the founding of the congregation, does not substantiate why this church building is a significant representative of the settlement of the community. This building post-dates the settlement of the area by fifty years. The nomination provides no comparative context for other resources in the town that may (or may not) have an association with early settlement of the area.

The Florida State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)



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 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). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Bethlehem Presbyterian Church

other names/site number AL393

2. Location

street & number 16979 Southwest 137 Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Archer N/A vicinity

state Florida code FL county Alachua code _____ zip code 32618

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 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Alissa Solano
Signature of certifying official/Title

12/8/17
Date

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation
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 certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

[Signature]

2-1-2018

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)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	3	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
1	4	total

Name of related multiple property listings

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

RELIGION: church school

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Gothic

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

RELIGION: church school

RELIGION: church-related residence

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls wood

roof metal

other asbestos

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 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.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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 36) 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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

Period of Significance

ca. 1884-1936

Significant Dates

ca. 1884

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Pearson, Charles

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository

Murray Laurie

Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
Name of Property

Archer, Alachua Co., FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	3	5	2	4	1	2	3	2	6	7	5	1	5
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
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 Murray D. Laurie, consultant

organization _____ date September 2017

street & number 2474 NW 77 Boulevard, Apt. C4017 telephone 352-335-6784

city or town Archer state FL zip code 32606

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Bethlehem Presbyterian Church

street & number 16978 SW 137 Avenue telephone 352-672-4660

city or town Archer state FL zip code 32618

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 amend 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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
Archer, Alachua County, Florida

SUMMARY

Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, located at 16978 SW 137th Avenue in Archer, is an example of Carpenter Gothic architecture. It was built on the corner of Church Street (SW 137 Avenue) and Gibson Avenue (SW 170 Street). The front-gabled frame sanctuary, also known as the auditorium, is a rectangular space measuring approximately 18 feet by 34 feet. The addition of a Sunday School wing to the end of the church opposite the steeple in 1936-1937 turned it into a T-shaped building. To accommodate the construction of this wing, which measures 60 feet by 24 feet, the building was turned 90 degrees on its site. Also on the church property is a non-contributing one-story concrete block house built by the church in 1958 for use as a parsonage. There are also two other noncontributing buildings on the church property, a one-story masonry building known as Gordon Hall, which was built in 1977, and a metal storage building added in 1991. A noncontributing structure, an open, roofed passage with concrete posts, links the church and Gordon Hall. It was built in 1997.

SETTING

The City of Archer is located about 20 miles west of downtown Gainesville, the county seat of Alachua County. Archer has a population of approximately 1,118 and encompasses about 7 square miles of mostly flat land common to the sand hill region of western Alachua County. Agriculture and livestock grazing practices of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the areas surrounding Archer have altered the original vegetation of pine trees and wire grass, but mixed hardwood hammocks can still be seen scattered throughout the city. There are no rivers, lakes or creeks in Archer.¹ The largest employer is the Mattox Foundry, established in 1905.²

Bethlehem Presbyterian Church is located in a residential neighborhood two blocks south of the old Archer Depot and the site of Archer's historic downtown. It originally faced the tracks of the Florida Central & Peninsular Railroad.³ The corner lot, which measures approximately 200 by 300 feet, is flat, with no curbing or sidewalks. There is minimal landscaping and part of the lawn is used for parking, designated by three short sections of wood fence on the west side near the rear of the church. To the west of the church property, across the street, is a sidewalk that was once a railroad track, with a wooded tract to the west. Historic photographs show the church facing these tracks, until the 1930s. A wooded vacant lot lies north of the church, and to the south stands a home built in 1921. The First Baptist Church of Archer occupies the adjacent lot to the southeast corner of SW 137 Avenue and SW 168 Street.

¹ Melanie Barr, "Historical and Architectural Survey of the City of Archer." 1994 (Survey #03771). 5.

² Barr, 33.

³ Robert Kasicki, Personal communication, May 30, 2017. For much of its existence this track in Archer was leased by the Savannah Florida & Western Railroad, part of the Plant Line.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2 Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
Archer, Alachua County, Florida

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Exterior

The Bethlehem Presbyterian Church is a wood frame Carpenter Gothic church which features a cross-gabled roof, brick chimneys on the ends of the original core, and a prominent steeple on the southeast corner (Photo 1). The steeple is roofed with embossed metal shingles and the two original bells still hang in the belfry. Carved wood brackets support the overhang of the steeple roof and the framework of the belfry and steeple. Prominent louvers with gabled dormers are inset on each side of the steeple and half-circle louvers are set below the belfry on all sides as well to provide ample ventilation for this element. The roofing on the rest of the structure is of composition shingles. The higher front gable roof of the church intersects with the lower side gable roof of the Sunday School addition. Both the 1936 Sunday School wing and the 1884 sanctuary were originally heated by wood-burning stoves. Brick chimneys, once connected to these stoves, remain in place. One brick chimney rises above the Sunday School wing, extending above the rear roof of the sanctuary. Another chimney is located at the southwest corner of the sanctuary.

The exterior walls are clad in wood drop siding. The bands also repeat a suggestion of the open beams on the interior, and bands below the windows hint as well at the ranks of pews within the church. Similar Gothic-inspired bands ornament the south and east façades of the steeple base and the main entrance to the church below the steeple. On the east side, a concrete walk and steps lead to arched double doors that open into the small vestibule. Red stained glass is set in the upper portion of the entrance doors, repeating the Gothic pattern of the church windows (Photo 2).

The fenestration consists primarily of multi-light single and paired double hung sash lancet windows and fixed light rose windows in the original core of the building and 2/2 and 2-light rectangular sash windows in the Sunday School addition. The lancet windows have clear glass in the center and decorative borders of red and white etched glass surrounding four lights below and four above, the top light framed in the pointed arch (Photo 3). The color scheme of these windows is original, as is most of the actual glass. There are also two round stained glass windows set high on the gable ends of the church. The church and Sunday School wing, which encompass 2,122 square feet, are supported by cast concrete piers with wood lattice sections between the piers. The current concrete piers date to the rotation of the church from an east-west to a north-south axis, which took place in 1936.⁴

⁴ Rance O. Braley, ed., "A Compendium of Histories and Documents Pertaining to the Members and Activities of Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, 1866-2007." Unpublished. This notebook is in the possession of the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church in Archer. It contains unpaginated sections dated from 1930s such as a summary of the history of the church written by the church historian, Mrs. Leo Morper in 1930 and ongoing annual summary reports or highlights by subsequent church historians through the years. It also contains newspaper clippings, photographs, and thumbnail sketches of prominent members.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number 7 Page 3 Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
Archer, Alachua County, Florida

Main (South) Façade

The main (south) façade of the building features a prominent gable front with centered, paired lancet windows and the arched wooden decorative straps applied to the drop siding (Photo 4). High in the peak of the gable is the round “Star of Bethlehem” window. In the far west portion of the front façade can be seen the historic chimney. To the east is the bell tower, the base of the steeple, which also has wooden decorative straps with an expressed Gothic arch. There is a single Gothic window at the base of the steeple. The four-sided steeple is clad in embossed tin, which flares at the base, below a gable headed louver. A flat louver is set below the arch on the section below the steeple element. Carved brackets support the bottom half of the steeple element. The decorative elements were painted green during the recent renovation of the church, using early postcards that showed the contrast of an unspecified color against the white painted walls.

East Elevation

The entrance to the church is on the southeast corner of the church at the base of the bell-tower/steeple (Photo 1). Double doors with a Gothic arch, set with red glass at the top, lead to the small vestibule. The appearance of the steeple element otherwise is the same as that of the side facing south. Concrete steps lead up to the door. A light is set in the wall beside the double doors. The east side of the church has two sets of Gothic windows that are similar to those on the south facade.

North (Rear) Elevation

The north (rear) elevation is dominated by the Sunday School addition (Photo 5). It completely obscures the rear of the original core of the building except for a portion of the gable end and chimney. This addition is very much out of character with the Carpenter Gothic aesthetic of the original core, with a much wider pitched roof, rectangular windows, and single wood glazed doors out of character with the more ornate doors in the original core. The covered walkway connecting the church to the non-contributing Gordon Hall is also prominent on this elevation.

West Elevation

The west elevation of the church also had two sets of paired Gothic windows, which are set opposite those on the other side of the church (Photo 6). The brick chimney that once served a wood stove, no longer in service, rises from the southwest corner of the gable roof.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 4 Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
Archer, Alachua County, Florida

Interior

Sanctuary

The congregation enters the small vestibule and then proceeds through a wooden door into the main auditorium, which retains a high degree of integrity. The high vaulted ceiling is supported by scissor trusses secured to king-posts (Photos 7-8). The walls are plaster above varnished wood wainscoting. The church pews date to 1872, or earlier, predating the current church building. The pew ends are carved with a trefoil motif (Photo 9). They are arranged with side aisles leading to the front of the auditorium. Two paired Gothic windows are centered on the north wall behind the pulpit (Photo 10). Before the Sunday School wing was added, these windows appeared on the exterior wall, but now are artificially illuminated by means of a boxed light behind the windows. Three chairs upholstered in red and a pulpit are placed on a raised dais. These chairs, along with the pulpit, were given to the church prior to 1930 by its Ladies' Aid Society.⁵ A Gothic style lamp hangs above the Lord's Table, and white globe lights hang from the trusses along each side of the church. Further illumination is provided by sconces along each side wall. The small choir stall with three pews and a piano are placed in the northwest corner (Photo 11). Doors on either side at the north end lead to the Sunday School addition to the rear of the church. A Baldwin organ is placed on the other side of the church, opposite the choir.⁶

Sunday School Wing

Floor plans of the structure indicate the way the space within is divided. Whereas the church auditorium is an open space, the interior of the 1930s Sunday School wing is partitioned by walls and movable panels that can be rearranged for various purposes (Photos 12-13). The Sunday School addition has rectangular, double-hung wood sash windows, some paired, and four exit doors. On the west and east ends of the Sunday School wing, doors on the south wall provide exterior exits, while a single exit door on the north wall of the Sunday School wing, directly behind the altar, leads to the covered passageway to the non-contributing Ulysses S. Gordon Fellowship Hall (Photo 14). A final door on the north wall of the Sunday School wing once provided an additional exit but is no longer used. Two restrooms and a nursery are located in the west end of the Sunday School wing, while a small office for the pastor is located in the east end.

⁵ Braley, "A Compendium..." Mrs. Leo Morper's history of the church for the year 1930

⁶ John A. Leynes, Jr., compiler. "Bethlehem Presbyterian Church History." 2001. 16. Booklet containing historical highlights of the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, based on the Minutes of the Session of the church leadership and church bulletins over a period of years. The piano was purchased in 1974. In 1975 the organ was donated by Carlos and Marjorie Proctor in honor of Rev. U. S. Gordon.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number 7 Page 5 Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
Archer, Alachua County, Florida

Alterations

The most significant change was the shifting of the church ninety degrees when the Sunday School wing was added in 1936. The former east elevation with its paired Gothic windows was obscured from the outside after the move. The chimneys became nonfunctional in the 1950s when a gas heating was installed.

Until the mid-twentieth century the two round rose windows held only clear glass. The circular "Christ in Majesty" window on the north gable was installed not long after WWII and was made by the Willet Studios of Philadelphia (Photo 15). The circular "Star of Bethlehem" window on the south gable was put in place on February 25, 1985 (Photo 16). It was fabricated by The Glass Shanty of Bryson City, North Carolina. Church records indicate that the current entrance doors replaced the original doors in 1955, the same year a new gas heating system was installed.⁷

The original parsonage was moved from the property and a new one built on the southeast corner of the lot in 1958. Gordon Hall was added in 1977. The covered walkway was constructed in 1991 (Photo 17) and the storage building was added in 1997.

The exterior, including windows and door frames, was recently repaired and repainted and the roofing replaced. Aluminum siding added to the exterior of the church in 1981 was removed. Although there were extensive repairs to the frame of the steeple, its roof was not replaced. This project, which was completed in 2016 and funded by a State of Florida historic preservation grant, protected the interior of the church from a leaking roof.

NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

The Manse (Parsonage)

In 1958, the original parsonage, known as "the manse," was sold and removed from the church property, and a new manse was built in the southeast corner of the lot (Photo 18). This building postdates the period of significance and is considered non-contributing. A remnant of the original concrete walkway and two large cycad plants to the east of the church entrance still mark the site of the old manse. The one-story, contemporary ranch-style house with intersecting gables home is constructed of concrete blocks with an asphalt shingle roof. The garage was originally on the west side of the house. In 1991, the original garage was extended to the rear and a double carport was added to the front of the house at its southeast corner.⁸ The driveway leading to the

⁷ Braley, "A Compendium..." Summary of the church history for 1955. The existing doors are very similar to those depicted in early photographs of the church.

⁸ Braley, "A Compendium...", Highlights of 1991 describes renovations and additions to the manse..

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number 7 Page 6 Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
Archer, Alachua County, Florida

carport, which has two pierced concrete screen panels, runs along the east border of the property. The exterior walls are unpainted and the windows are aluminum frame. There are two entrances on the south façade. The original one is close to the garage, and the entry to the newer wing is on the west side of the front of the house.

The interior of the 1958 Manse has retained many of its original features. The original front door opens to the carpeted living room, with the dining room and kitchen just beyond, to the north. The kitchen has its original cabinets and an open set of shelves set above a waist-high counter separating it from the dining room, a popular arrangement with modern homes of the 1950s. Three bedrooms and a bathroom (with the original tile) are grouped on the east side of the house. The walls and ceilings are plastered and painted. A door from the kitchen opens to the 1991 wing, a long, open combination sitting room and bedroom, with a bathroom to the rear.

Gordon Hall

In the 1970s, Bethlehem Presbyterian Church congregation built a new fellowship hall containing space for offices and classrooms, in addition to a large open space used for gatherings and social occasions (Photo 19). The one-story, gable-on-hip roof building is built of concrete block with the appearance of weatherboard on the front façade. It measures 5,250 square feet in area. The main entrance, which faces west, is recessed between two short wings and consists of double doors that open to the main social space. Named for Ulysses Short Gordon, a popular pastor who preached in Archer after retiring from the First Presbyterian Church of Gainesville, the hall was dedicated on April 24, 1977. A covered walkway connecting the church to Gordon Hall leads from the door on the north façade of the Sunday School addition to a door on the south façade of the new hall (Photo 21). A non-contributing metal storage building also stands on the north boundary of the property.

Integrity

The Bethlehem Presbyterian Church is still in its original location and the setting remains the same as it was during its period of significance. Although lifted and rotated 90 degrees to accommodate the construction of the school addition, the rotation took place in 1936 and is considered a historic alteration to the building. Hence, the building retains sufficient integrity of setting, location, and association. The school addition is considered a historic alteration to the building as well, and the building as-is substantially reflects its historic 1936 design. At one point covered over in aluminum siding, the siding has since been removed and the building has been restored to its original wood siding exterior. Therefore, it retains sufficient integrity of feeling, design, materials, and workmanship.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 7 Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
Archer, Alachua County, Florida

SUMMARY

The Bethlehem Presbyterian Church is nominated to the National Register at the local level under Criterion A for Settlement/Exploration and Criterion C for Architecture. The period of significance extends from its original date of construction circa. 1884 to 1936. The church is a locally significant example of Carpenter Gothic architecture, which is best expressed through its steep pitched roof, pointed arch windows and doorways, and its prominent steeple. The wood frame church was built in Archer in 1884 for a Presbyterian congregation that originally formed in nearby Wacahoota in 1866. The church itself is the oldest church building in continuous use in the St. Augustine Presbytery and the oldest church still standing in Archer. The building itself as the oldest surviving church building in the town represents an important element of the early settlement and development of Archer, when the railroad transformed the nature of the community. Despite the 1936 addition, the church has retained its original setting, materials, and workmanship that reflect its significant architectural associations. The addition of the Sunday School wing in 1936 required that the building be turned 90 degrees on a north-south axis, so although its location has been changed, the rotation of the building is considered a historic alteration. Its construction was the result of the growth of the church and expansion of church programs such as Sunday school classes. The building currently reflects its historic 1936 appearance. Noncontributing resources include parsonage (known as "the Manse"), built in 1958; a fellowship hall, built in 1977; a covered walkway, built in 1997; and a metal storage building, added in 1991.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Alachua County was founded in 1824, three years after Spain formally ceded Florida to the United States. Newnansville became the seat of government for the county, which originally stretched from the Georgia border south to Charlotte Harbor.⁹ As Florida's population increased, 21 additional counties were created from this original Alachua County land mass. Because of its inland setting, the first settlers in this part of Florida struggled to find markets for their crops. Although they were drawn to the natural advantages of Alachua County, it was not until the construction of railroads that timber, cotton, citrus, and other produce from the area could be transported to more lucrative markets. Early roadways, such as the Bellamy Road, Florida's first "federal highway," were often impassable sandy tracks through a dense wilderness. This began to change with the construction of the Florida Railroad, which began in 1853. Owned by Senator David Yulee Levy, the Florida Railroad ran through Alachua County from Fernandina to Cedar Key. The new railroad bypassed the town of Newnansville. As a result, most of the residents relocated to the newly established railroad town of

⁹ The Newnansville historic marker reads: "Newnansville was the site of a well-developed nineteenth century rural village which became the first county seat in Alachua in 1828. Standing at the junction of several important roads, it prospered as a commercial center for the corn, cotton and citrus industries of the expanding Middle Florida frontier. In 1854 the county seat was moved to Gainesville and the town declined in population and importance. When a new railway line, built in 1884, bypassed the town, Newnansville was abandoned. Today all that survive are two cemeteries and the remains of a road. The site of Newnansville was listed on the National Register in 1974."

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number 8 Page 8 Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
Archer, Alachua County, Florida

Gainesville, which became the new county seat of Alachua County in 1854. The population of Newnansville dropped precipitously.¹⁰

The construction of the Florida Railroad would have a profound impact upon the history of the county, as the route selected by the rail line determined the early settlement patterns in the county. Frontier towns bypassed by the railroad such as Newnansville and Wacahoota disappeared, while places like Gainesville and Archer thrived and became important hubs of commerce, industry and agricultural production after the Civil War and on into the late nineteenth century.¹¹ The railroad was built out to Gainesville in 1859 and was completed the following year. Alachua County did not have long to enjoy this new luxury, however, as the Civil War began the following year and did considerable damage to the railroad. Following the end of the war, more railroads crossed the countryside, bringing thousands more settlers into Alachua County.¹²

History of Archer

Originally known as Deer Hammock, the settlement that became the town of Archer had its beginnings as a small cluster of log cabins in the 1840s. The settlement quickly grew into a busy town after Yulee selected it as a stop on the Florida Railroad in 1858. He renamed the settlement for Florida Secretary of State James T. Archer. By 1860, 40 families lived in and near Archer and the business district centered near the new depot.¹³ Houses of milled lumber replaced the log cabins and a fortunate discovery of clay beneath the soil's surface meant that bricks were soon available for chimneys and piers for the new buildings. Although growth languished during the Civil War years, life returned to normal when rail traffic was restored in 1865. New settlers arrived and tourists were drawn to the benign winter weather in Florida, aided by the growing network of railroads. A hotel opened, as well as a school and several churches, the first built by the Methodists.¹⁴ The 1870s marked a boom time for the citizens of Archer, with their cotton crops bringing prosperity and drawing the attention of new homesteaders.¹⁵ Several Quaker families arrived from northern states, establishing orange groves and building a Quaker Meeting House. Among the new arrivals in 1875 were a group of Presbyterians who had originally settled near Fort Wacahoota, now drawn to flourishing Archer. They shared space with other denominations in the Union School as they made plans to build a church of their own. It is their story that

¹⁰ Susan Yelton, "Newnansville: A Lost Florida Settlement," *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, 53, no. 3 (Jan 1975), p. 329-330.

¹¹ John B. Picard. *Florida's Eden: An Illustrated History of Alachua County*. (Gainesville: Maupin House, 1994) 16-19, 25, 29

¹² Charles H. Hildreth and Merlin G. Cox, *History of Gainesville, Florida, 1854-1979* (Gainesville: Alachua County Historical Society, 1981), 1-3, 11-13; John B. Pickard, *Florida's Eden: An Illustrated History of Alachua County* (Gainesville: Maupin House, 1994), 12-18-35-36; Charles Henry Webber, *The Eden of the South* (New York: Leve & Alden's, 1883).

¹³ Rance O. Braley. *Nineteenth Century Archer*. (Archer: Rance O. Braley, 1990) 11-14, 19-21.

¹⁴ Susan Elaine Sowell, "Archer Among the Oaks" (master's thesis, University of Florida, 1991), 69.

¹⁵ Jess Davis, *History of Alachua County, Florida: 1824-1969* (Gainesville: Jess C. Davis, 1962), 85-86. In 1882, 600 bales of Sea Island cotton were shipped from Archer as well as a variety of fruits and vegetables grown on surrounding acreage.

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informs the significance of the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, built in 1884, the oldest remaining church in Archer.

Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church was founded during the Reformation, led by the dynamic Protestant preacher John Calvin (1509-1564), who gave Presbyterianism its form of governance and its distinctive character. He provided for pastors, teachers, elders and deacons, all of whom were equal, with no superior bishop among them. Some scholars suggest that this democratic form of elected officials contributed in later centuries to the development of western democracy. Calvin's ideas had a great influence on a Protestant leader from Scotland, John Knox. Knox's influence was so dynamic and forceful that by 1560, the Scottish Parliament abolished the Roman Catholic religion and established what would become the Presbyterian Church as the religion of the country.¹⁶ At odds with the English monarchy (which attempted to impose an Episcopal polity and theology on Scotland), many Presbyterians immigrated westward to Ulster, in Northern Ireland. As the American colonies opened, an increasing number of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians crossed the Atlantic to seek more freedom to practice their religion and to take advantages of the opportunities in the new land. Early in the nineteenth century, Presbyterians in America embraced the spirit of nationalism and launched the Home Missionary Society that supported the growth and spread of new congregations as the United States spread westward into new territories.¹⁷ The Presbyterian Church flourished in North and South Carolina, where fine churches, schools, colleges, and seminaries were built, many supported by Americans of Scottish ancestry. When settlers migrated from the Carolinas to the newly-acquired Territory of Florida, they brought the Presbyterian Church with them. Presbyterian pioneers in East Florida soon organized themselves into the Suwannee Presbytery. Its first mission church opened in St. Augustine in 1824, organized by Dr. William McWhir, a Scotch-Irish educator.¹⁸

Presbyterian Church in Alachua County

William J. McCormick, an Irish-born minister who originally immigrated to central South Carolina with his family, was called to preach to settlers who had relocated to Florida. The Reverend McCormick was ordained by the Presbytery of Harmony, SC, in 1853, and later became the pastor of the Liberty Hill Presbyterian Church, near Camden, SC. He was invited to join the farmers, planters, and merchants from that area who bought land in Alachua County. He ministered to these devout Presbyterians in Gainesville, Wacahoota, Fort Clark, Micanopy, and other towns and settlements established by pioneers in north central Florida's sparsely settled "cotton belt" that stretched from Fernandina to Cedar Key. He preached his first public sermon in

¹⁶ Lefferts A. Loetscher, *A Brief History of the Presbyterians* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 25-26, 37-38.

¹⁷ Loetscher, 82-90.

¹⁸ Dr. E. F. Montgomery, "History of Suwannee Presbytery," November 2, 1957 [unpublished manuscript], Part I. in Braley. "A Compendium...".

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Alachua County in the courthouse in Gainesville in 1858.¹⁹ First preaching in private residences and public buildings, he worked with local Presbyterians to build churches and expand his scattered congregations, even helping with the actual construction of some of them.²⁰ During the Civil War, Reverend McCormick preached to Confederate soldiers in the field, many of whom were part of the tight-knit communities he knew well. On the 25th anniversary of his ministry in Florida, in January 1883, he preached a historic sermon about his life on the Florida frontier. Rev. McCormick continued to serve as a pastor until his death later that year, at age 62.²¹

Historical Significance

Bethlehem Presbyterian Church

The Bethlehem Presbyterian congregation was originally founded in Wacahoota in the 1860s by Reverend McCormick. Known as the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church of Wacahoota, there were only fifteen members in the congregation at the time. Many of the founding church members were from South Carolina and Georgia. Rev. McCormick later mentioned that the congregation at Wacahoota dwindled “due to death and removal” and that the surviving members regrouped in Archer.²² As the organizing minister of the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, McCormick served as its Stated Supply Pastor from 1866 to 1873.²³

No known photographs survive of the original church building in Wacahoota and the building itself no longer stands. All that remains of this church is a small privately owned cemetery containing about a half-dozen marked graves.²⁴ Oral tradition states that pews from the original Wacahoota church were later moved to Archer and reused in the existing church.

William C. Andruss, a devout Presbyterian elder originally from Newark, New Jersey, played a significant role in the history of the Bethlehem church. Andruss settled in Archer during the early 1870s, where he established himself as a pharmacist, postmaster, and businessman. He also organized prayer meetings on Sundays in Archer’s Union School.²⁵ Hoping to join forces with Andruss and strengthen their congregation, the members

¹⁹ F. D. McCormick, *Planters, Plantations & Presbyterians* (Ocala, FL: F. D. McCormick, 2001), 5-12, 114-116. Written by his grandson, this is an account of Rev. McCormick’s life as a Presbyterian minister in Florida.

²⁰ McCormick, 114-115.

²¹ McCormick, 100-112. The text of his grandfather’s sermon, preached in Gainesville on the first Sunday of January, 1883, is contained in this book.

²² McCormick, 114-115.

²³ Leynes, “History of the Church, Revised Fall of 2001.” 1, 4.

²⁴ Rance and Joshua Braley visited and photographed this cemetery on January 31, 2009. Grave markers still legible at that time included those of Martha C. Phinney and a member of the Winecoff family. Joshua Braley, personal communication, June 2, 2017.

²⁵ Sowell, 69. The Union School, which served as a school on weekdays and for religious services on Sunday as the Union Sabbath School, was the first public building built in Archer.

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of the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church eventually decided to relocate from Wacahoota to Archer.²⁶ Their first Session Meeting in Archer was held on September 20, 1875, in the Union School building. At this time, Andruss was received into the Bethlehem congregation.

After relocating to Archer, the congregation decided to build a new place of worship. Andruss deeded the congregation a lot on the corner of Church Street and Gibson Avenue in Archer for this purpose. The congregation received donations toward a new building from a Presbyterian church member from Cedar Key and from the denomination's Home Mission Committee.²⁷ A succession of Presbyterian clergymen served as supply ministers as the members began to plan their new church. The building was dedicated on December 7, 1884, as the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church. However, in 1908, the name was changed to the Archer Presbyterian Church.²⁸ At that time, Church membership was about 55 parishioners and Sunday School enrollment was 40 students.²⁹

The Sunday School wing, added in 1936, once functioned as a space for classes in Bible study for various ages and, with a small kitchen, was also a social space for special occasions (Figure 7). Christian education and fellowship were of great importance to Presbyterians, as this addition reveals. Today, both of these elements of church life are held in Gordon Memorial Hall. However, a small nursery, storage, and bathrooms still make the old addition a convenient and serviceable space for the Bethlehem congregation.

Parsonage (Manse)

In order to appeal to and retain a resident pastor, a church needed to provide attractive housing. In 1904 the congregation's Ladies' Aid Society bought William C. Andruss's home for use as the "manse" or pastor's residence.³⁰ Andruss's home, built in the late 1870s, was a large two-story dwelling located just a few yards away from the church (Figure 8). This residence served as the church parsonage from 1904 until the 1950s. By the 1950s, the church was having a hard time attracting a resident pastor as the manse was old and in need of serious repairs. The old manse was sold and removed to a lot a block to the west, where it is still stands. In its place, a modern, ranch style house was built in 1958 on the southeast corner of the church property (Figure 9). This non-contributing building was dedicated on October 11, 1959.³¹ The site of the original manse is indicated

²⁶ Davis, 86. Andruss was the Archer postmaster from 1874 to 1887 and was president of the Archer City Council in 1882-1883.

²⁷ Alachua County Records, Deed Book T, Page 432 and Deed Book Z, page 558. There are two deeds recorded for this property in 1884.

²⁸ Leynes, 1.

²⁹ Leynes, 6-7

³⁰ Braley, "A Compendium ..." An early photograph of the manse contained in this Compendium is inscribed, "The Manse, Bought in 1904 by the Ladies' Aid Society."

³¹ Leynes, 14.

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today, near the edge of SW 137 Avenue, about half way between the church and the new manse by a large cycad plant and a fragment of the original concrete walkway.

Historic Context of Bethlehem Presbyterian Church after 1936

The Women of the Church and the Men's Club were the principal lay organizations. In 1950, there were 27 members of the Women of the Church, for instance, but only 7 were active. They attended programs in Jacksonville organized by the Suwannee Presbytery, organized fellowship dinners with the Methodist Women of Archer during the year, and assisted the Young People's group with transportation to their conference. The Women also met with the Williston Women of the Church for officer's training classes.³²

In 1951, the church had no full-time pastor and the officers of the church carried on as best they could. Either the congregation was too small to afford the salary of a fulltime pastor or there were few available who would serve in the small town of Archer. There seemed to be no prospects for growth, and the lay members were making every effort to keep the church alive. Many of the young people were in the service or off at college, and several of the long-time members had passed away. In 1953, a former pastor, Rev. H. W. Koeling, returned and he and his family moved into the old manse. The minutes of the church note births, deaths, marriages, and a few new members. The enrollment in Sunday school was 36, with attendance at 22 with five different classes: men, women, young people, and intermediate and primary children's classes. Classes met in the Sunday School, but meetings of the Women of the Church were often held in the homes of the church members. Suppers were held in the Sunday School addition, with programs such as one in 1953 on Stillman Institute in Tuskegee, AL. The Women of the Church hosted showers for Presbyterian brides as well as luncheon for district meetings of the Suwannee Presbytery.³³

In 1957, the church observed a World Day of Prayer with 40 attending, including members of the Methodist and Nazarine churches in Archer. The offering of \$13 was given to Overseas Relief. The Women of the Church hosted the District Conference in March. In December, the Church hosted its annual Christmas program that included a choir with members from the local Methodist, Baptist and Nazarine churches. Despite being without a pastor for several years in the late 1950s, the members carried on. They built a new manse in 1958, and installed a new pastor, Rev. William Christie, in 1959. Church attendance rose and the church was full, with an attendance of 160, for the first homecoming held in October of 1959, with many former members in attendance.

³² Braley. "A Compendium of Histories and Documents" church historian, 1949-1950.

³³ Braley. "A Compendium" church historian 1949-1950 and 1952-1953.

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Sunday School attendance was about 40. The Women were active in attending various Presbyterian programs throughout the state, planning events for the church members, and raising funds for church causes.³⁴

The 1960 church budget shows a total of \$3710.00, including \$2400 for the pastor's salary. Revenues included \$2870 from the Congregation and \$840 from the Home Mission Committee. Throughout the 1960s, the church continued to hold regular Union Services with other churches in Archer. When Rev. Christie moved to the position of pastor for the Kanapaha PC, the Archer church had a series of supply ministers who filled the pulpit each Sunday, while lay members continued to organize Bible Study and Sunday School classes. In 1966, the church hosted a community Easter Sunrise Service.³⁵

The church was happy to welcome a new pastor early in 1967, Dr. Leighton Scott, but saddened when he suffered a heart attack and passed away in November of that year. Extensive repair and painting was done to the exterior of the Church building in 1967. Guest ministers held services following the loss of Dr. Scott. In 1970, the recently retired minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Gainesville, the Reverend Ulysses Gordon, agreed to become the "shepherd of our small flock," as the church recorder wrote. The church celebrated his birthday in December and they were joined by many former members and friends from out of Archer. Due to the popularity of Dr. Gordon, the church was full every Sunday. On Easter Sunday in 1973, the attendance was 145. In 1976, the church officers voted to ask the congregation to approve the construction of a building for education and recreation, to be named for "Preacher" Gordon, who passed away in April of that year. It was at this time that they decided to change the name, Archer Presbyterian Church, back to the original name, Bethlehem Presbyterian Church.³⁶

In 1986, the church membership was 86. The church records become very brief, but many social events were now being held in Gordon Hall. The church members continued to provide flowers for the altar every Sunday and to plant flowers in the church yard. The church membership was about 50 to 60 active members during the 1980s and 1990s, with a variety of supply ministers preaching at Sunday services.

In December of 2009, the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church celebrated its 125th Anniversary. The *Gainesville Sun* noted the occasion with an article and photographs. The minister, the Reverend Joshua Braley, had invited former ministers and older church members to share their stories and memories, and also invited members of the other churches in Archer to attend the celebration. Despite a small congregation, the devotion and spirit of the pioneers who founded the church still inspires the church members to follow their lead as good stewards of the Lord's house. In 2000, the church was given the opportunity by the Presbyterian Church USA of retaining

³⁴ Braley. "A Compendium," church historian, 1956-1957 and 1958-1959.

³⁵ Braley. "A Compendium..." church historian, 1966, 1967.

³⁶ Braley. "A Compendium..." church historian, 1967, 1968, 1970, 1976

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ownership of the church property, and the congregation voted to do so in June of that year. In 2015, the church officers applied for and received a historic preservation grant to replace a leaking roof and to remove aluminum siding (installed in 1981) and repair and repaint the exterior.

As the oldest church in Archer, the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church has long contributed to the spiritual needs of not only its own congregation, but has acted in alliance with the other religious institutions in Archer, such as The survey of architectural resources conducted in 1994 noted that in 1890 there were two churches for white congregations (Quakers and Presbyterians) and three “colored churches” (which were all located outside of the city limits). The Quaker meeting house no longer stands. The Methodists built a wooden church in 1891 with Carpenter Gothic elements, including an elaborate wooden bell tower and windows headed with pointed cornices. This building is still standing. The Baptists organized in Archer in 1920 (the present Baptist church was built in 1955) and the members of the Church of the Nazarene built a new church in 1945. Mentions of community events such as the Easter Sunrise Service, the annual Community Thanksgiving Service, and Vacation Bible School in the records of the Bethlehem Church indicate that they often hosted the other churches and played a role in uniting them in Christian endeavors.³⁷

ARCHTECTURAL CONTEXT

Gothic Revival

What is now known as Carpenter Gothic is actually a vernacular interpretation of Gothic Revival architecture. A review of sources pertaining to the use of the Gothic Revival architectural style in Protestant and, in particular, in Presbyterian churches, indicates profound liturgical and religious significance. In England, an appreciation of the art and architecture of the Middle Ages influenced the design of Church of England buildings as early as the 1740s, both in shape and form and in interior and exterior embellishments. Gothic was considered by leading churchmen to be the architecture of Christ’s church as it went back to the beginnings of Christianity in Europe and England.³⁸ Although the medieval Catholic churches that inspired the Gothic Revival architecture focused on the sacraments and Mass celebrated at the altar, the emphasis of Protestant churches was on preaching and an unmediated relation to God. The pulpit, where the Word of God was the focus, became more prominent, and the wooden communion table emphasized man’s direct access to God through Christ.

This revival of Gothic architecture influenced Church of England cathedrals and parish churches, emphasizing a sense of verticality and complexity of design that were associated with the social and religious reforms of the

³⁷ Barr, 21, 22, 23, 31, 39.

³⁸ Phoebe B. Stanton. *The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture: An Episode in Taste, 1840-1856*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), 159.

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early 19th century. The Oxford Movement was a reaction to the non-emotional and secularizing trends and an effort to restore earlier elements of ritual and symbolism.³⁹ The Cambridge Camden Society, a learned society founded in 1829 by students of Cambridge University, promoted the study of Gothic architecture through their journal, *The Ecclesiologist*, which offered drawings and comments supporting the Gothic Revival style, which also spread interest in the style across the seas.⁴⁰ Travelers from the United States were impressed with this new influence, which veered away from the earlier American preference for churches with symmetrical facades, a central steeple, columns and porticos, and minimal ornamentation inspired by classical Greek architecture.⁴¹ The Gothic revival churches, with their asymmetrical facades, towers and off-set steeples, crenelated rooflines, and lancet windows eventually influenced public buildings, schools and colleges, and even Victorian era homes, both grand mansions and country cottages.⁴²

The Episcopal Church in America embraced the Gothic Revival architectural aesthetic of the Church of England. British-born architect Richard Upjohn (1802-1878) was already working on plans for Trinity Church on Wall Street in New York City by 1847.

Carpenter Gothic

The origins of what is known as Carpenter Gothic come from earlier attempts to adapt the Gothic Revival style to residential buildings. In 1842, Andrew Jackson Downing and Alexander Jackson Davis published the book *Cottage Residences*, which popularized the Gothic Revival style as an ideal style for rural houses. The style caught on, especially in rural areas, thanks in large part to Downing's penchant for promotion. It also caught the attention of church missionary societies and small rural congregations who were looking for cheap and efficient ways of incorporating the Gothic Revival aesthetic into their church buildings. In 1852, Richard Upjohn published a highly influential book titled *Upjohn's Rural Architecture: Designs, Working Drawings, and Specifications for a Wooden Church, and Other Rural Structures*. Building off the work of Downing and Davis, this book provided detailed drawings and specifications for smaller Gothic Revival style churches that could be built of local materials by any competent carpenter. These simple, functional Carpenter Gothic churches were built across the country, including in Florida.⁴³ The usage of Carpenter Gothic in domestic architecture

³⁹ National Register of Historic Places, Florida's Carpenter Gothic Episcopal Churches Multiple Property Documentation Form, Florida, National Register # 64500106, Section E, 1-2.

⁴⁰ Stanton, 31. See also Geoffrey Rowell, *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities of the Catholic Revival in Anglicanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), and Arthur Pierce Middleton, *New Wine in Old Skins: Liturgical Change and the Setting of Worship* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1988), 16-20.

⁴¹ Stanton. xxi, 31, 43.

⁴² Rachel Carley, *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1994), 135.

⁴³ Richard Upjohn. *Upjohn's Rural Architecture: Designs, Working Drawings and Specifications for a Wooden Church, and other Rural Structures* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1976); National Register of Historic Places, Florida's Carpenter Gothic Episcopal Churches, Section E, 1.

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remained popular until the Civil War, when its popularity gradually declined. It continued to be a dominant form of church architecture, however, well into the 20th century.

In 1884, the Presbyterian Church Erection Fund published its own bulletin as a guide for small parishes that included drawings of a variety of Gothic Revival churches along with specifications and estimated costs. This publication demonstrates that by 1884, the Gothic Revival in church architecture had spread well beyond the confines of the Anglican Communion and was exerting a marked influence on Presbyterians. Despite a lingering suspicion of Catholic influences, Presbyterians had come to embrace Gothic architecture as a distinctively Christian style, capable of not only pleasing the eye but also turning thoughts heavenward.⁴⁴

Carpenter Gothic is a vernacular interpretation of Gothic Revival applied to often simple wood buildings. Carpenter Gothic buildings usually have less ornamentation and were usually designed by local carpenters who relied on plan books such as *Upjohn's Rural Architecture*. Characteristics of Carpenter Gothic churches include steeply pitched roofs and pointed arch doors and lancet windows. The churches usually have a prominent vertical element such as a steep pitched steeple that borrows heavily on Gothic Revival inspired architecture.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Bethlehem Presbyterian Church is a locally significant example of Carpenter Gothic architecture. The style is best expressed by the steep vertical steeple, lancet windows and pointed arch doorway, steep pitched roof, and board and batten siding.

William Andruss may have worked with a local builder to design the church to include a corner steeple, lancet windows, and the flat bands of wood on the front façade and the base of the bell tower that economically suggest the Gothic Revival aesthetic without excessive ostentation. Andruss may have also seen some of the small, wooden Carpenter Gothic churches in Florida built for Episcopalian congregations earlier, such as Trinity Church in Melrose, completed in 1883.

Despite this, evidence from another local congregation may shed light on the matter. Eight miles northeast of Archer stands the sanctuary of the Kanapaha Presbyterian Church. The two churches are closely related. Both congregations have always belonged to the same denomination, and both were established by Rev. William McCormick (Kanapaha in 1859, Bethlehem in 1866). Furthermore, their current sanctuaries were built only two years apart: that of Bethlehem Presbyterian Church in 1884, and that of the Kanapaha Presbyterian Church

⁴⁴ Board of the Church Erection Fund. *Fourteenth Annual Report* (New York: Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1884). This document shows a variety of drawings and plans based on Gothic Revival architecture for churches for rural parishes. None closely resemble the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church in Archer.

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in 1886. These two church buildings share an identical floor plan and very similar exterior details (Figure 5).⁴⁵ They are so similar in every detail that, as historian Ben Pickard wrote in 2001, Kanapaha Presbyterian Church “is a perfect match for the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church in Archer.”⁴⁶

Although it is not known for certain, the building was likely built by Charles Pearson, a prominent Archer resident during the 1880s who designed and built the Kanapaha Presbyterian Church.⁴⁷ Pearson moved to Florida from Indiana in 1882. Like many Archer settlers of that era, he was a practicing Quaker. He and his family planted orange groves in Archer and were active in promoting a local citrus industry. Pearson was also a skilled carpenter. The first structure he built in Archer was a log cabin which provided temporary shelter for his newly-arrived family.⁴⁸ Soon, however, Pearson began using lumber from a local sawmill in other building projects. He built himself a two-story wood frame residence which still stands at 301 E. Church Street in Archer, a few blocks from Bethlehem Presbyterian Church.⁴⁹ If Charles Pearson designed and built the Kanapaha Presbyterian Church in 1886, it seems likely that he built the virtually identical Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, located in his home community, in 1884. Adding weight to this hypothesis is the fact that Pearson purchased ten acres of land from William C. Andruss in February 1883.⁵⁰ Andruss, more than any other individual, seems to have been responsible for the relocation of the congregation to Archer and the decision to build a new sanctuary at the corner of Church Street and Gibson Avenue. Given that Charles Pearson knew William C. Andruss in 1883, and that Pearson built an identical church in 1886, it seems probable that Pearson built Bethlehem Presbyterian Church in 1884.

Regardless of the builder’s name, the Gothic Revival influence on the design of the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church is indisputable. The sanctuary’s high ceiling recalls the high, open ceilings of medieval churches. A system of light scissor trusses is attached to the wooden ceiling with narrow king posts, said to have been assembled with wooden pegs.⁵¹ The auditorium seems larger than its approximate 33 feet by 26 feet

⁴⁵ Historic American Building Survey. Kanapaha Presbyterian Church, FL-394. The Church was recorded in 1973. Measured drawings and photographs confirm the similarities of the two structures.

⁴⁶ Ben Pickard, *Historic Alachua County and Old Gainesville: A Tour Guide to the Past* (Gainesville, Alachua Press, 2001), p. 112, cf. p. 131.

⁴⁷ Kanapaha Presbyterian Church, “Some Historical Data,” a manuscript preserved in the church records, states that this church was dedicated on June 26, 1886, and notes, “Building built by Charles Pearson.”

⁴⁸ T. Gilbert Pearson. *Adventures in Bird Protection: An Autobiography* (New York: D. Appleton Century Company, 1937), 1, 4.

⁴⁹ Davis, 86. Pearson is listed as a carpenter living in Archer in the 1900 census of Alachua County, Florida; Cory William Ewing. “Historic Archer: A Tour Through The Past.” March 1997. The Pearsons came to Archer from Indiana in 1882 and that Thomas Pearson and his family was encouraged to move to Archer by William Lipsey; that Charles was a carpenter and that his personal house was constructed in 1885 at 301 East Church Street. Charles Pearson’s younger brother, T. Gilbert Pearson, a founder of the Audubon Society, wrote of his life in Archer in his autobiography *Adventures in Bird Protection*.

⁵⁰ Alachua County Ancient Records, Deed Book O, pages 771-772.

⁵¹ Lashonda Stinson Curry. “Archer church celebrates 125 years.” *Gainesville Sun*, December 5, 2009.

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dimensions, which have the illusion of a longer, rectangular space. Pews are arranged with longer seats in the middle and shorter side aisles leading to the front (north end) where the choir, the pulpit, the wood communion table, and a raised platform where chairs for the pastor and two elders are placed, facing the congregation (Photo 14). The pulpit and chairs on the dais were purchased sometime before 1930 by the congregation's Ladies' Aid Society.⁵² Before the Sunday School was added and the church rotated ninety degrees, a pair of lancet windows behind the pulpit would have admitted light into the sacred space, along with the windows on the other three walls (Photo 14, 17). The windows behind the pulpit are still in place, but illuminated by electric lights placed in a light box behind this wall during church services. Music is an integral part of the liturgy, and the Bethlehem Church has an organ on the east side of the north end of the auditorium as well as a piano placed in front of the small choir stall in the southwest corner (Photo 15).⁵³

An architectural survey of Archer conducted in 1994 concluded that there were not enough historically or architecturally significant resources in the city to constitute a historic district, but that there were some individually significant buildings.⁵⁴ There were two Carpenter Gothic buildings records within the city limits of Archer: Bethlehem Presbyterian and Archer United Methodist. Much like the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, the circa 1891 Archer Methodist Church also has a tall steeple and bell tower. Although the Methodist church retains better original integrity, it is a smaller and more simplified form of Carpenter Gothic than Bethlehem Presbyterian Church.

CRITERION CONSIDERATION A

Although this property is owned by a religious institution, its significance primarily lies in its architecture and its connections to the early settlement of the community.

⁵² Braley, "A Compendium .." See church historian notes for 1930.

⁵³ Leynes, 16. The piano was purchased in 1974 and the organ was donated in 1975. See Session Minutes, September 11, 1974.

⁵⁴ Barr, 23, 39.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section number 9 Page 20 Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
Archer, Alachua County, Florida

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PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

- Braley, Josh. Personal communication, January 5, 2017; June 2, 2017.
- Robert Kasicki, personal communication, May 30, 2017.

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National Park Service**

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Section number 10 Page 21 Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
Archer, Alachua County, Florida

VERBAL PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The boundary encompasses all of Parcel No. 04960-000-000 of the Alachua County Property Appraiser's Office records.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries enclose all of the resources associated with the historic Bethlehem Presbyterian Church in Archer.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number Photos Page 22 Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
Archer, Alachua County, Florida

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
2. Archer, Alachua County, Florida
3. Murray D. Laurie
4. March 1, 2017
5. Murray D. Laurie
6. View of main (south) facade and east elevation of church, *facing northwest*
7. Number 1 of 19

Note: Numbers 1-3, 5 are the same for the following photographs, except where noted

4. March 1, 2017
6. View of church entrance, *facing west*
7. Number 2 of 19

4. August 2, 2017
6. View of paired windows on main (south) facade, *facing north*
7. Number 3 of 19

4. March 1, 2017
6. View of main (south) facade of church, *facing north*
7. Number 4 of 19

4. August 2, 2017
6. View of north (rear) elevation of church, *facing south*
7. Number 5 of 19

4. August 2, 2017
6. View of west elevation of church, *facing east*
7. Number 6 of 19

4. May 10, 2017
6. Interior view of church sanctuary, *facing south*
7. Number 7 of 19

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number Photos Page 23 Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
Archer, Alachua County, Florida

4. March 1, 2017
6. Interior view of church sanctuary, *facing north*
7. Number 8 of 19

4. May 10, 2017
6. View of side of one of the pew ends, *facing east*
7. Number 9 of 19

4. May 10, 2017
6. View of chairs, pulpit and windows at north end of church, *facing northwest*
7. Number 10 of 19

4. May 10, 2017
6. View of choir stall: *photographer facing northwest*
7. Number 11 of 19

4. March 1, 2017
6. View of interior of Sunday School showing movable panels, *photographer facing west*
7. Number 12 of 19

4. March 1, 2017
6. View of Sunday School area, showing light box behind windows to the right, *facing east*
7. Number 13 of 19

4. March 1, 2017
6. View of Sunday School rear door leading to covered walkway, *facing northwest*
7. Number 14 of 19

4. May 10, 2017
6. Interior view of Christ in Majesty window on north elevation, *facing north*
7. Number 15 of 19

4. March 1, 2017
6. Interior view of Bethlehem window on south elevation, *facing south*
7. Number 16 of 19

**United States Department of the Interior
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number Photos Page 24 Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
Archer, Alachua County, Florida

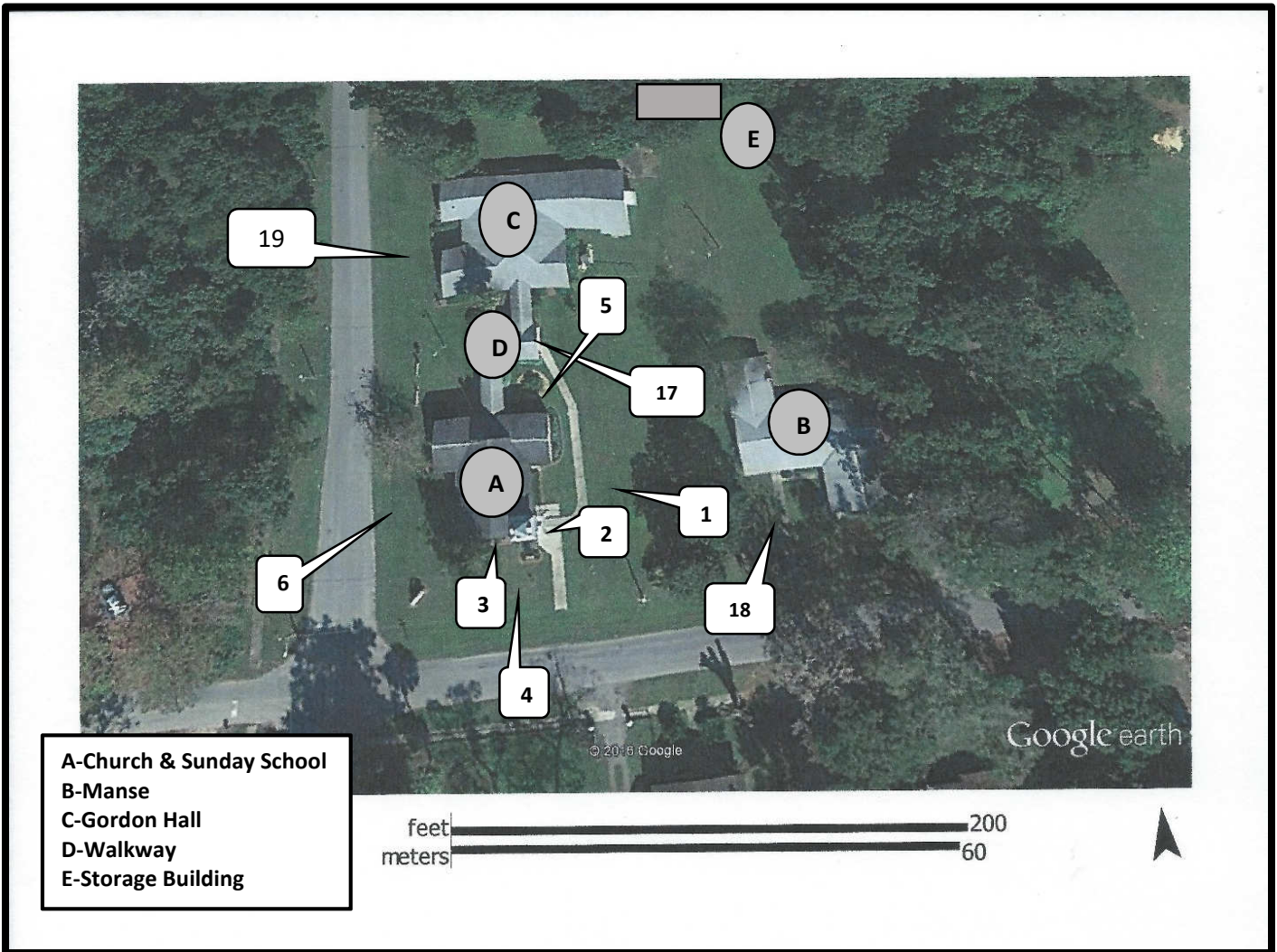
- 4. March 1, 2017
- 6. View of covered walkway, *facing northwest*
- 7. Number 17 of 19

- 4. March 1, 2017
- 6. View of front and west facades of manse, *photographer facing east*
- 7. Number 18 of 19

- 4. May 10, 2017
- 6. View of front of Gordon Hall, *facing east*
- 7. Number 19 of 19

Bethlehem Presbyterian Church

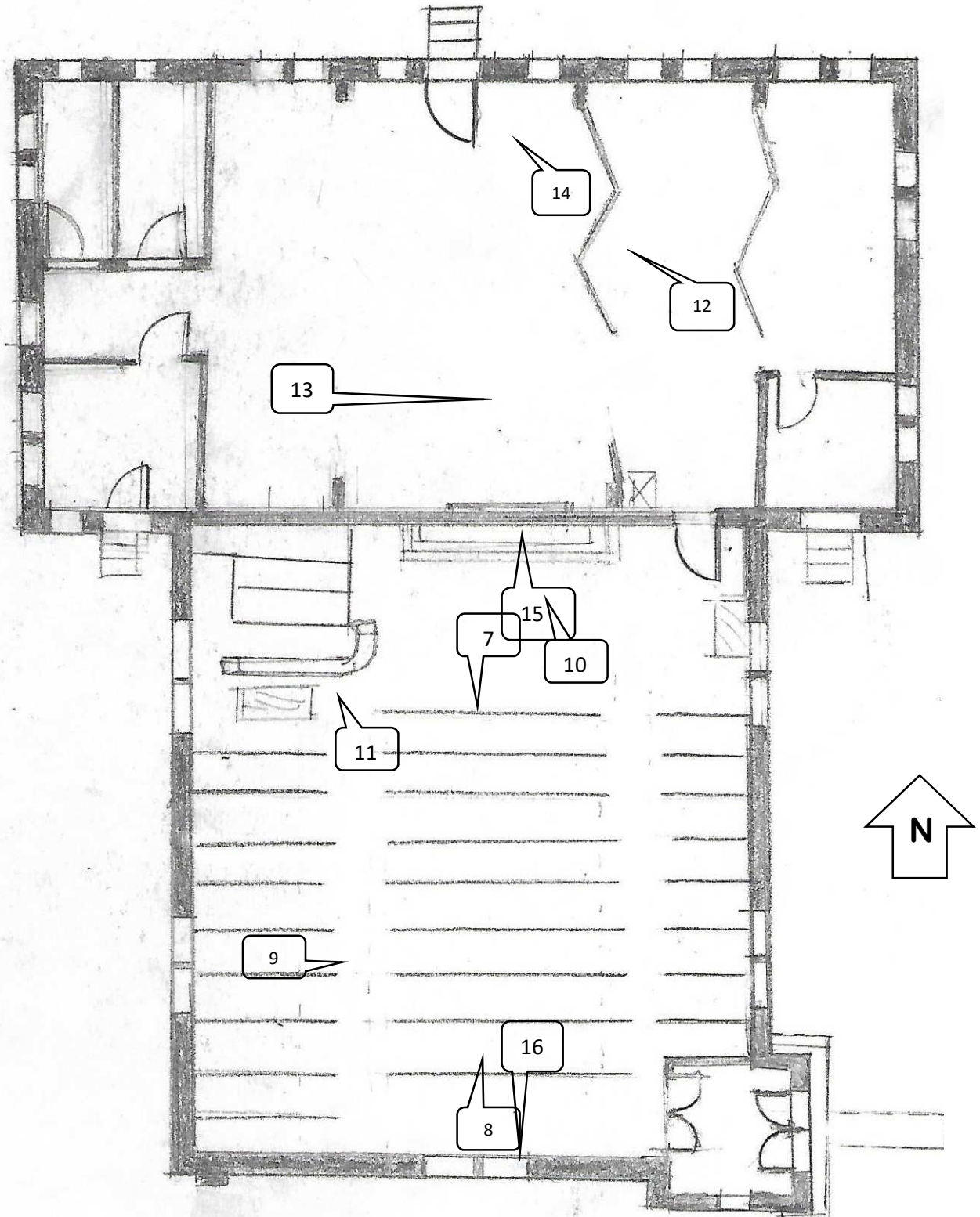
Archer, Alachua County, FL



Key to Exterior Photographs

Bethlehem Presbyterian Church

Interior Floorplan



Bethlehem Presbyterian Church


16979 S.W. 137 Avenue
Archer, Alachua Co., FL

UTM:
17R 352412 3267515

Latitude: 29.5286
Longitude: -82.5230

Datum: WGS84

Legend

 Proposed National Register Boundary

Date: 9/18/2017

N

1:1,000

0 40 80 160 Feet

0 10 20 40 Meters

Basemap Source: Source: Esri,
DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar
Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS,
USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping,
Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo,
and the GIS User Community











BETHLEHEM
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SUNDAY
SCHOOL 10
WORSHIP 11:00
ALL
VISITORS WELCOME!

Handicapped
Parking
Permitted































PROVIDENT CARE
COMMUNITY CENTER
1234567890

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 12/18/2017 Date of Pending List: 1/29/2018 Date of 16th Day: 2/13/2018 Date of 45th Day: 2/1/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 2/1/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : **Yes**

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



Alachua County Advisory Board Program

Historical Commission

Mr. Ashley Wood, Chair
Mrs. Melanie Barr, Vice Chair
Mrs. Pat Moore, Secretary

2017 NOV 27 A 11:27
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

November 15, 2017

Florida Division of Historical Resources
National Register Review Board

RE: Nomination- Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, 16979 Southwest 137th Avenue, Archer

Dear Mrs. Almy, Mr. Gonzalez, Dr. Smith and Ms. Uguccioni,

The Alachua County Historical Commission is pleased to support the nomination of the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church in Archer, in Southwest Alachua County, to the National Register of Historic Places. The town was named for Florida's first Secretary of State, James J. Archer. The Church is a significant structure and recently was restored, thanks to a State Historic Preservation grant. It is a fine example of Carpenter Gothic and bears some resemblance to the Kanapaha Presbyterian Church located towards Gainesville.

The mission of the County Historical Commission is "To promote, preserve and protect Alachua County's historic resources." It is important to add well preserved significant structures to the National Register, and we think this Archer religious building is well deserving of the status. We commend the State for recognizing the importance of the structure and working with the local community to ensure it is preserved.

We are in full support of this nomination to the National Register. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ashley M. Wood".

Ashley Wood, Chair

cc: Lee Pinkoson, Chair, Board of County Commissioners
Michele L. Lieberman, Interim County Manager, via Gina Peebles, Assistant Manager



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

RICK SCOTT
Governor

KEN DETZNER
Secretary of State



December 11, 2017

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief,
National Register of Historic Places
Mail Stop 7228
1849 C St, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Bethlehem Presbyterian Church (FMSF#: 8AL00393), in Alachua County**, to the National Register of Historic Places. The related materials (digital images, maps, and site plan) are included.

Please do not hesitate to contact Ruben Acosta at (850) 245-6364 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Max Imberman".

Max Adriel Imberman
Historic Preservationist, Survey & Registration
Bureau of Historic Preservation

MAI/mai

Enclosures