

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received SEP 30 1986

date entered NOV 1 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Asbury United Methodist Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 11th & K Streets, N.W. not for publication

city, town Washington vicinity of

state District of Columbia code 11 county code 001

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Trustees of the Asbury United Methodist Church

street & number 11th & K Streets, N.W.

city, town Washington, D.C. vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds

street & number 6th & D Streets, N.W.

city, town Washington, D.C. state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

District of Columbia  
title Inventory of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1984  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Division  
D.C. Department of Consumer & Regulatory Affairs

city, town Washington, D.C. state

## 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Asbury United Methodist Church is sited on the southwest corner of 11th and K Streets in northwest Washington, D.C. The church was designed by Washington architect Clarence Lowell Harding and constructed in 1915-16. The substantial English Gothic Revival building is the third structure housing the Asbury Methodist Church to be erected on the site.

The first Asbury Church was a frame structure of modest Federal styling. A broad gable roof topped the three-story rectangular block. A small fanlight was placed high in the gable end of the building. The church's double entrances were also situated in the gable end. Nine years later, the frame structure was replaced by a substantial brick edifice. The new structure repeated the massing and siting of the original structure. The prosperity of the church was apparent by its double-story, stained glass windows and elaborate masonry entrance. The double door entrance was crowned by a full entablature and braced by two columns.

The present Asbury is a granite and limestone structure built in 1915-16. The church is an example of typical English Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture. The broad gable of the sanctuary faces K Street (north). The facade is dominated by a broad, obtuse stained glass arch with vertical tracery known as the Window of the Good Shepherd. The church's triple entrance is marked by obtuse arches. The original doors have been replaced by gray tinted glass doors with bronzed aluminum framing. Despite these minor changes to its entrance doors, the intentions of the original composition of the main facade remain clear.

The gabled sanctuary block is braced by two rectangular towers. The varying heights of the towers give the building an asymmetrical disposition while strengthening the vertical expression of its design. The main tower anchors the corner of 11th and K Street. It is accented by masonry pinnacles.

The east and west facades carry the spirit of the main facade. Five bays of windows are divided by shallow buttresses. Painted spandrels separate the balcony windows from those on the main floor.

The interior of the church has been significantly altered. While the original plan remains, the furnishings have been replaced over the years and the balcony has apparently been extended. The open truss ceiling made of wooden beams remains an outstanding feature of the sanctuary.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
				Afro-American History
<b>Specific dates</b>	1915–1916	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Clarence Lowell Harding	

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Asbury United Methodist Church ("Asbury") is significant for its historic associations with the development of Methodism within Washington, D.C.'s black community. The church's history is reflective of the social history of that community, from enslavement through abolition, emancipation and reconstruction to the civil rights movement of this century. In addition, Asbury is the oldest black Methodist church in Washington, D.C. to remain on its original site and thus illustrates the greatest integrity of location among those historic churches. The present building, constructed in 1915-16, is significant for developments associated with Asbury at that time and since that time.

The history of Asbury had its beginnings in the formative years of the Methodist Movement in America. In late 1772, Methodist evangelists first came to Georgetown. Robert Strawbridge, "the Father of American Methodism" and Richard Owings, "the first Native Local Preacher," spread the gospel of universal brotherhood, spiritual redemption and experiential faith throughout Frederick County, which at that time included Georgetown. The simplistic message and emotional dynamism of their sermons greatly appealed to free and enslaved blacks alike, and early records indicate that blacks constituted a healthy portion of Georgetown's first Methodist congregation. The local Methodist movement continued to spread and in 1814 Foundry Methodist Church ("Foundry") was established at 14th and C Streets in Washington City (presently known as Washington, D.C.). At the time of its inception, Foundry had twenty white and eighteen black members. These numbers quickly increased so that by 1817 the Church boasted one hundred and seventy-two white and one hundred and eighteen black members.

The shared fellowship of Foundry's black and white congregation is illustrative of one of early American Methodism's basic tenets, that of universal brotherhood. John Wesley, the church's founder, held an uncompromising antislavery stance which is clearly represented throughout his writings. Further, early Methodist evangelists Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke openly opposed slavery and strongly encouraged abolitionist activity.

Blacks were attracted to Methodism for the modicum of independence and leadership the church allowed them. As opposed to other protestant denominations, Methodist and Baptist churches allowed blacks to preach. When secular laws were passed forbidding such a practice, Methodists created a preaching category called exhorters. Exhorters were, in fact, black preachers. Exhorters often accompanied itinerant white preachers as assistants or served as unofficial pastors to their own people.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE ATTACHED

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 0.3 acres

Quadrangle name Washington West

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	8	3	2	4	1	9	0	4	3	0	7	6	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Southeast Corner of 11th & K Streets, in the Northwest quadrant of the City of Washington, D.C., Lot 22, Square 317

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	n/a	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title

organization Ronald E. Lewis & Associates

date September 15, 1986

street & number 525 School Street, S.W., Suite 300

telephone (202) 554-4004

city or town Washington, D.C. 20024

state

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Carol B. Thompson*

State Historic Preservation Officer  
title for the District of Columbia

date September 29, 1986

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*Carol D. Skurl*

date 10/1-86

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration