

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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OCT 14 1987  
NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name First Congregational Church  
other names/site number Metropolitan Community Church of the Rockies

2. Location

street & number 980 Clarkson Street N/A not for publication  
city, town Denver N/A vicinity  
state Colorado code CO county Denver code CO 031 zip code 80218

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> objects
			<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.  
Barbara Sudler 10-6-87  
Signature of certifying official Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer, Colorado Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register. Alana Byers 11-16-87  
 See continuation sheet.  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.  
 removed from the National Register.  
 other, (explain:)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religious structure, church

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religious structure, church

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th C. and 20th C. Revivals

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Other: Lombardic Revival

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

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walls brick

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roof Asphalt

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other 

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.****SITE**

Built in 1907 and completed in 1910 on the southeast corner of 10th Avenue and Clarkson Street, the First Congregational Church faces west onto Clarkson Street and extends east to a public alley. Set back and slightly above the public sidewalks and parking strips off the streets the church occupies most of six city lots along with a parsonage built in 1912 to the south of the church. Concrete steps and a walk extend from Clarkson Street to the main entrance and also from the street to the steps at the side parsonage porch entrance and to the church office wing entrance. From the main entrance, a diagonal concrete walk extends to 10th Avenue. Concrete steps and a walk extend from the Tenth Avenue sidewalk to the north porch. A paved parking area is located behind the parsonage and south of the office wing with access from the alley. Projecting rear wings of the church extend to the alley. There is foundation planting which is enclosed with concrete curbing placed in 1986 to separate planting areas from grassed areas. Street trees have been planted in the parking strips. Modern iron hand railings are at the front steps and a chain link fence defines the south property line.

The church is located in Denver's Capitol Hill neighborhood surrounded by single-family and detached houses, terraces, and multifamily structures. At its corner location, the church is an anchor within the predominately residential area.

**CHURCH**

The First Congregational Church, now the Metropolitan Community Church of the Rockies, is a one-story cream colored brick structure with a stone foundation and composition shingle roof. Designed by the architectural firm of Roeschlaub and Son, the 7th and 8th century Italian Lombard style inspired structure originally consisted of a cubical sanctuary with a three-story corner bell tower. In 1910, a large social hall was added to the east with a church office wing extending south and a meeting room/kitchen wing extending north. The addition, built in a similar style, created an irregular 64' x 108' plan and a varied roof line which covered over the original wood shingled conical apse roof.

The two main elevations of the sanctuary structure extending from the corner bell tower are characterized by projecting pavilions with raked parapets concealing gabled roofs extending to the pyramidally hipped roof. At the west

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facade the central pavilion is flanked by recessed flat roofed bays with crenelated parapets. The south recessed bay projects beyond the southwest corner of the sanctuary structure which supports the boxed eave of the main hipped roof. At the south elevation the lower office wing, set back several yards from the facade, extends east toward the alley. Its shed roof, with a west pent roof across the half gable, is an extension of the social hall roof which is flat with shed roofed extension also to the east and north. At the alley, the roof is a clipped hipped roof form. A small, low, one-story, flat roofed east wing at the south corner contains restrooms. At the northeast corner, a low kitchen wing projects beyond the rear wall of the social hall and extends around the north elevation of the social hall to the sanctuary structure and encloses a meeting room. The extended shed roof is hipped over the kitchen.

The rear social hall roof is punctuated with three corbeled cap chimneys all with dentils. The large east chimney serving the furnace is set within the angle of the social hall and kitchen wing. Extending above the eave of the meeting room, with its exposed and moulded rafter tips, the north chimney with an arched flue cover serves a fireplace, as did the east chimney near the south corner. At the north and south slopes of the rear roof structure are a low hipped roofed dormer (south) and a shed roofed dormer (north), each with two windows and flared shingled faces and cheeks. The plain rafter tips are exposed. The south dormer provides indirect light for the oculus in the ceiling of the sanctuary's semicircular apse. The pyramidal sanctuary roof has a finial at the apex. Sloped roofs are of composition shingles.

The lower kitchen/meeting room structure is attached to the sanctuary with a shouldered parapet extending to the higher sanctuary roof which has exposed rafter tips above the recessed bays flanking the central north pavilion. The flat roofed bell tower, with crenelated parapets, once had a low pyramidal roof with wide overhanging eaves. That roof structure was removed in the 1930s.

The First Congregational Church has exceptional decorative brick work and trim that define its association with Lombard architecture. The projecting south and west pavilions of the sanctuary structure are designed with corner pilasters extending to shoulders flanking a gabled parapet set with raked crenels or arched corbel tables. A pressed metal cornice with dentils is set over the gable shoulders and extends up the parapet rakes. Similar arched corbel tables extend across the recessed flanking bays and support corbeled parapets. The parapets have moulded cap stones stepped up at the abutments and around the southwest corner.

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At the north elevation, the similar recessed bays are set under the main roof eave which has exposed, moulded rafter tips. The three-story, corner bell tower is constructed with corner pilasters which extend above the roof parapet. Set within the pilasters above the second floor level are arched corbel tables carrying a pressed metal cornice matching the pavilion parapets. At each elevation the pressed metal cornice forms a sill for the belfry openings. Above the belfry openings, an arched corbel table is set flush with the corner pilasters and supports the roof parapet defined by corbeling at the raised corners which are infilled with elongated flat corbel tables. The corner pilasters were heightened above the corbel table and the tower parapet is set with a plain cap replacing the hipped bell tower roof.

The brick walling with narrow jointing extends from a beveled stone water table at the height of the narthex floor level. The projecting water table and seven courses of brick masonry set on a cut stone foundation extend around the principle elevations at a uniform height. Corner pilasters are reflected through the foundation.

The predominant windows are set within the north and west pavilions. Each large, round arched opening, characteristic of all the round arched openings of the building, has two projecting corbel courses of headers with a moulded brick cap carried on corbeled and moulded label stops at the imposts. Typically for the building, the windows have stone sills. Moulded wood mullions define three tall round arched glazed openings extending to two roundels and infilled with pendentives. The north window contains an art glass scene of "Christ on the Mount." The west window depicts Christ in prayer. All the art glass sanctuary window glazing is slated for restoration.

The recessed flanking bays each have a round arched opening containing two mullioned lunettes, a roundel, and pendentives, all blind. The sanctuary windows below are flat headed. Two similar window openings define the southwest corner. The south elevation also contains a triple arched clerestory below the eave. Each mullioned opening contains two round arched lights, a roundel, and pendentives. The northerly recessed bay of the facade, adjacent to the bell tower, contains a shortened window opening accommodating an interior balcony stairway. Maintaining the symmetry of the facade feature, the area below the window opening sill, defined by a flat corbel table, is paneled to the sill height. At the west elevation of the office wing are a round arched window and doorway. At the south elevation of the office wing are plain segmentally arched windows and a door opening, all with uniform head heights. Tall segmentally arched openings with transoms light the social hall. The east kitchen windows are segmentally arched, while those of the restroom addition have flat heads.

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Pairs of round arched windows, without blind arch mullions, flank the chimney of the meeting room wing. At the northwest corner of the meeting room wing is an inset porch which forms a loggia and provides secondary access to the sanctuary and access to the social hall. Cutting the water table, the entry is through a wide round archway. At the side of the porch, a similar archway extends to the water table and is infilled with a short wrought iron railing composed of alternating "S" curves. The porch is paved with tessera tiles. The loggia walls containing a flat headed double entry door and a secondary round arched window, are painted white. Adjacent to the west archway is a tall round arched window lighting the interior vestibule.

The west elevation of the corner bell tower contains the main church entrance into the narthex. Modern double doors with eight panels each are set within the deep, round arch reveal. The clear glass lunette is proposed for restoration. The entrance aedicula painted white and buff consists of brick Tuscan pilasters supporting a moulded brick and triple corbeled arch extending into an open pediment. A stone cornice extends from gable shoulders up the rakes of the pediment. The stone pilaster capital impostes extend across the aedicula to the bell tower walling, as do the pilaster bases. Wide steps within low stone podia centered on the tower's corner pilaster rise to the recessed entrance paved with tessera tile.

Above the entrance aedicula, contained within the pilasters, are a pair of round arched window openings. Similar openings light the tower's chapel windows at the north elevation which are set above a pair of flat headed first story narthex windows. The masonry mullion extends the height of first floor windows through the second floor windows. Spandrels are infilled with corbel tables below the upper window sills. The bell tower glazing is to be restored. On all four elevations are triple belfry openings with a single moulded corbel arches with label stops. The belfry openings are unglazed.

The sanctuary interior is of architectural significance. Opening from the northwest corner narthex which has no architectural detailing of note, through two doorways, the sanctuary is a large cubical space with a sloping floor centering on the southeast semicircular apse. A balcony, with a paneled face and brass railings, extends across the west end of the room and is supported on two cast iron Tuscan columns. Access is by a Colonial Revival staircase with moulded railings and turned balusters. The stairway also provides access to the bell tower chapel which contains no architectural detailing.

Except in the balcony area, pilasters on pedestals and with moulded plaster cartouche capitals, support a plaster entablature which extends around the room from which a coved ceiling springs. Plaster beams relating to the pilaster spacing coffer the ceiling. Within the frieze space around the room plaster rosettes contain electric lights. Lights also enframe the window openings

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which have no trim except for sills. The crown moulding of the entablature extends around the apse which is framed with pairs of pilasters. An oculus with a moulded plaster surround is set in the coved ceiling. At the north elevation and at the west elevation crossed by the balcony the large feature windows extend into the coved ceiling. This is matched by the south triple clerestory windows and by a moveable partition at the east. Providing access to the social hall, the partition can be raised into a loft space.

A pipe organ, installed in 1923 and removed in 1982, filled the apse with ranks of pipes. The original Kimball organ has been donated back to the present congregation and is proposed for restoration. Arranged in "Cleveland Style," four sections of curved oak pews relate to the northwest to southeast axis of the sanctuary. Altar furnishings are recent additions, but relate to pew motifs and are set on a raised dias with circular steps extending into the sanctuary. The platform was constructed by the previous congregation.

Removed and returned to church, the south art glass feature window has been restored. Remaining sanctuary windows have been recovered by the present congregation in whole or part and are being restored for reinstallation. The large feature windows depict realistically executed scenes from the life of Christ and are enframed with geometric and foliate glazing in various types of art glass. Flanking side windows contained geometric, foliate patterned art glass, and Christian symbols.

The north meeting room retains a fireplace surround of guaged and moulded brick with a plain mantel shelf. All other interiors are characterized by plain door trim, five-across panel doors and untrimmed plaster window reveals and are not considered significant.

#### PARSONAGE

Built in 1912 adjacent to the church, the two-story, hipped roof foursquare parsonage is constructed of the same cream colored brick, its only associative design consideration. The brick foundation is a darker color. The facade is characterized by a massive one-story, arts and crafts porch with large corner piers rising above the roof eave and a solid brick wall to rail height. Entrance is by a side stairway extending north to the church. Tapered beams support the porch eaves and span between corbeled brackets on the porch piers which are decorated at the top with corbeled brick strapwork. The north porch roof slope extends onto the north elevation of the main structure forming a pent roof over a shallow projecting bay.

The parsonage's hipped roof, covered in composition shingles has a hipped roof and a central dormer with boxed eaves and three window openings. The face and cheek are wood shingled. The wide eaves, with exposed rafter tips, are

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supported on four equally spaced diagonal brackets extending from brick corbels. At the second floor, typical one-over-one double hung window openings flank a small central window with a decorative brick surround and multilight sash. The sills of the flanking windows extend in a continuous belt course around the structure and support exaggerated brick quoining at the corners. The walling is plain below except for a first floor window sill belt course. Opening onto the front porch the central doorway is flanked with a bay window to the south and a one-over-one double hung window to the north. The side elevations are characterized by projecting chimney stacks extending above the eaves to corbeled chimney caps. The rear elevation has an undistinguished two-story glazed porch and a central hipped roof dormer.

The central hall plan interior is typical of the period with a plain craftsman style oak staircase. The south living room has a colonette chimney piece. However, the interior has been altered, and has no significance.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

N/A

Significant Dates

1907

1912

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Robert S. Roeschlaub and Son

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SIGNIFICANCE

The First Congregational Church meets Criterion C and Criterion Consideration A for its architectural significance in the rare use in Denver of the architectural style--7th and 8th century Italian Lombard style--designed by architect Robert S. Roeschlaub, the "institutional" architect of Denver. The brick masonry Lombard round arches with corbels and label stops, crenel parapets and rakes, a loggia porch, a classical aedicula, pressed metal cornices, and arched and roundel window mullions is academically correct, typical of the early 20th century period in American architecture.

The First Congregational Church represents an exceptional example of Roeschlaub's later academic style and dates from a period of his career when he produced few buildings. German born and a Civil War veteran, Robert S. Roeschlaub, Colorado's first registered architect, arrived in Denver in 1873, and subsequently designed many Colorado monuments from the Central City Opera House (1874) to numerous schools and college buildings, business blocks, residences, and other churches, most notably Trinity Methodist (1887). By 1907 when the First Congregational Church was built, Roeschlaub was in partnership with his son Frank. Robert S. Roeschlaub, Colorado licensed Architect No. 1, was president of the Colorado Association of Architects and was instrumental in securing an American Institute of Architects Chapter for Colorado in 1892. He was made a Fellow of the AIA in 1900 and retired in 1912.

The First Congregational Church of Denver was organized in 1864 and by 1905, after several moves and expansion, had settled on the need for a new building. That year the church purchased four lots at 10th Avenue and Clarkson Street for \$5,000. The City of Denver issued Building Permit No. 215 on February 8, 1907, with a projected cost of \$23,000. The corner stone was laid on March 18, 1907; the building was dedicated November 3, 1907. Described as a building 64' x 108' on the building permit, the dimensions reflected the church structure as completed in 1910 according to the tax records which list the parsonage as dating from 1912. The church apparently had acquired lot numbers 5 and 6 for construction of the parsonage previously. There are no building permits. The

See continuation sheet



**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Richard R. Bretell. Historic Denver, The Architects and the Architecture, 1858-1893.  
Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 1973. pp. 94-121.

Centennial History, October 23, 1864 to 1964. First Plymouth Congregational Church  
of Denver (Copy: Western History Department, Denver Public Library.)

City of Denver, Building Permit No. 215, February 8, 1907.

Denver Public Library. Western History Department, Photographic File and Pamphlet File.

Kenneth R. Fuller. "A Century of Architecture, 1873-1973," Symposia, Vol. 8, No. 1.  
November 1973, pp. 15-17.

Rocky Mountain News, March 18, 1907, p. 7. and March 19, 1907, p.6.

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository:

Denver Public Library

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property less than 1 acre

UTM References

A 

1	3
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5	0	2	0	0	0
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4	3	9	7	7	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary encompasses six city lots on the southeast corner of Clarkson Street and 10th Avenue and extends to an east public alley.

Legal Description: Lots 1 through 6, inclusive, Block 131, South Division of Capitol Hill.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the church and parsonage structure and is the 1912 boundary of the First Congregational Church property.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Charles Arehart, Pastor  
organization MCC of the Rockies date \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number 980 Clarkson Street telephone (303) 860-1819  
city or town Denver state Colorado zip code 80218

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First Congregational occupied the church property until 1929 when the congregation merged with First Plymouth Congregational and moved to 14th Avenue and Lafayette Street. First Covenant, a Swedish Congregational group followed. Central Bible Church acquired the buildings in 1966 and sold them in 1980 to a developer for potential condominium development. The church was vacant until the property was acquired in February 1986 by the Metropolitan Community Church of the Rockies who has been responsible for the church building's rehabilitation and restoration and for maintenance of the adjacent parsonage for rental purposes.