

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 determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction 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 an 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 Underwood United Methodist Church

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 24183 373rd Avenue [] not for publication

city or town White Lake [x] vicinity

state South Dakota code SD county Aurora code 003 zip code 57383

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.)

Jay D. Vogt SD SHPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

State Historic Preservation Officer

08/14/2008
Date

South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office
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.
- removed from the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- other, explain
 See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Anna McClure

5-22-08

Underwood United Methodist Church
Name of Property

Aurora County, South Dakota
County/State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not count previously listed resources.)

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

Name of related multiple property listing.
(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 Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Religion, religious facility
- Funerary, cemetery
-
-
-
-

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Religion, religious facility(for special occasions only)
- Funerary, cemetery
-
-
-
-

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Vernacular
-
-
-
-

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Cement
- walls Wooden
- roof Asphalt Shingles
- other
-

Narrative Description

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

Underwood United Methodist Church

Name of Property

Aurora County, South Dakota

County/State

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Periods of Significance

1908-1920

Significant Dates

1908

1920

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Sam McCormick, Joe Sheldon, Will Breeding, Swan Nelson and John Owen

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 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Underwood United Methodist Church
Name of Property

Aurora County, South Dakota
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 8 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 14 521804 4858237
Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

[] 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 Mike Vogel

organization South Dakota State Historical Society

date March 14, 2008

street & number 900 Governors Drive

telephone (605) 773-6056

city or town Pierre

state SD

zip code 57501

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 Underwood Community Cemetery Association Incorporated

street & number 24183 373rd Avenue

telephone (605) 249-2577

city or town White Lake

state SD

zip code 57383

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including 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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Underwood United Methodist Church
Aurora County, South DakotaSection number 7Page 1**DESCRIPTION**

The Underwood United Methodist Church is located in a rural area at 24183, 373rd Avenue, ten miles north of White Lake in Aurora County, South Dakota. The church, constructed in 1908 and modified in 1920, sits on eight acres of land (including the cemetery) in the northeast corner of Section 27 in Patten Township. The cemetery is located 50 yards south of the church. Two outhouses, that are still used, are located approximately 100 feet west of the church. A grove of trees on the west and north sides provides a windbreak for the church reducing wind chill in the winter and minimizing blowing dust and soil during gusty times.

The Underwood Church is a vernacular, one story, rectangular plan, gable front type of building with a bell tower centered on the roof near the east side and also the main entrance. The bell tower is located on a platform base that is constructed into the roof line on both the north and south sides of the steep roof. The bell tower is octagonal with eight Gothic arch openings and handrails on each side. A conical top with metal finial and a slightly flared bottom roof line cover the bell tower. A weather vane is located atop the finial. The foundation is made of concrete and the roof has asphalt shingles. The main entrance, or narthex, is a gabled offset built into the roof located on the southeast corner of the church. A saltbox roof with a flared end on the façade covers the entrance. A chimney in the center of the church roof is located just west of the bell tower. The exterior has narrow wood clad siding with exposed rafters below the roof in the gable and on the north and south ends underneath the overhang.

When the church was modified in 1920 to expand the nave, a new foundation, also made of concrete, was built and a meeting hall was constructed in the basement. Access to the basement meeting hall is located on the south side of the church just west of the narthex.

The east elevation, or façade, from left to right includes the main entrance and three long rectangular one-over-one double hung wood windows. Three glass block windows are located in the foundation providing light for the meeting hall in the basement. A concrete platform with three steps and metal handrails assists in providing access to the wooden double door entry. Each door is decorated with three panels. The platform and steps are covered with outdoor carpeting. Decorative woodwork on the main entrance exists below the roofline and where the gable is attached to church. Bands of fish scale and diamond pattern shingles are located in the gable and a small gothic window that has been enclosed with wood is centered in the gable.

The south elevation, from left to right, features a one-over-one double hung wooden window, a two pane wooden door entrance near the west end, four more double hung wooden windows, an enclosed entrance to the basement and another double hung wooden window on the south side of the narthex. The windows are capped with a simple wood molding. There are three glass block windows in the foundation on this elevation. The west entrance features a concrete platform with three steps and metal handrails. The platform and steps are covered with outdoor carpet. The entrance for the basement on the east end features a simple shed roof and a wooden door entrance.

The west elevation of the church has no openings except for two glass block windows in the foundation for basement lighting.

The north elevation of the church has seven windows matching the type windows on the south elevation. There are also four more glass block basement windows on this elevation.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Underwood United Methodist Church
Aurora County, South DakotaSection number 7Page 2

The interior of the church has been somewhat modified over the years but the original spacing and floor plan, which is rectangular with a center aisle, is essentially the same since 1920. The interior walls are made of wood and the ceiling has been lowered for energy purposes. The altar entrance has been relocated to the center in 1953 and at the same time wooden paneling was added to the west wall behind the communion table. The old church pews were replaced with new ones in 1970. Under the carpet the original fir flooring still exists.

The two outhouses are wooden, half gable with a shed roof and asphalt shingles. Each has an air vent located near the north end. A simple wooden door entrance exists on the south end of each outhouse.

The cemetery, located south of the church, comprises almost four of the eight acres of the property. The boundary of the cemetery has a chain link fence surrounding it. At the entrance to the cemetery is a decorative metal archway wide enough for one vehicle at a time to pass through. In the middle of the cemetery is a thirty foot flagpole.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Underwood United Methodist Church
Aurora County, South DakotaSection number 8 Page 3**SIGNIFICANCE****Introduction**

The Underwood United Methodist Church is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a fine example of the wooden country churches that were built in rural South Dakota during the early part of the twentieth century.

Historical Background

The largest groups of American Indians present in South Dakota directly before white settlement were the Nakota, Dakota, and Lakota, known collectively as the Sioux. Anthropologists believe that the Sioux were pushed out of Minnesota onto the plains where they became the dominant group by the mid to late 1700's, although tribal creation stories tell of the Sioux inhabiting the area since time immemorial. The Dakota and Nakota live primarily east of the Missouri River while the Lakota roamed the western half of the state. The Sioux were eventually forced onto reservations through a series of questionable treaties that opened up land for white settlement.

Aurora County was created by an act of the legislature in February, 1879 and organized August 08, 1881. The county was named Aurora for the Goddess of Dawn.¹ The nearest town to the historic Underwood Church (ten miles away) is White Lake. White Lake, South Dakota is located in the west central part of Aurora County in the southeast part of the state. The lake north of town got its name because of a phenomenon of light reflection which occurred only during the early years of settlement, about 1880-1882. At that time, the lake was brimful and from a distance the reflection of the sun caused it to glisten and appear white.²

The geographic area (for miles) surrounding the Underwood Church School consists of farmland. Vast fields for growing small grain crops and raising cattle comprise the economy today much the same as it did shortly after the homesteaders relocated to the area in the late 1880's. At the same time, the expansion of the railroad to western South Dakota assisted greatly in helping build the infrastructure in small towns as well as individual farmsteads. Railroads delivered cut lumber which had not been available up to that time. This supply of lumber escalated construction in towns along the rail lines. Towns like White Lake sprung up quickly and became the economic, social and religious centers for those who lived in town as well as the people in the rural area near town.

¹ Aurora County Historical Society, *Aurora County History*, Argus Printers, Stickney, South Dakota, 1983

² Diamond Jubilee Committee, *White Lake Community History*, Aurora County Standard, White Lake, South Dakota, June 1960

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Underwood United Methodist Church
Aurora County, South DakotaSection number 8 Page 4

Churches were among the earliest and most prominent buildings constructed in South Dakota settlements. These distinctive structures were extremely important to church members as symbolic centers of religious, social, and ethnic identification. Even to the unchurched and to members of denominations who had no church buildings, community churches were sources of pride, serving as social and cultural gathering places.

In small towns and rural districts, the church was often the focus of settlement. The Swiss Mennonite Churches in eastern Hutchinson and western Turner counties and the Catholic churches of Dimock and Hoven offer good examples. In larger communities, two or three churches might dominate, with smaller churches representing diverse elements in the community. In still other towns, interdenominational churches flourished, accommodating several small religious groups that pooled their efforts and formed a "unity" congregation. Later, as the population increased, individual congregations built their own denominational churches. Older religious buildings, vacated because of mergers or new construction, were often sold to other congregations.

The intense evangelism that characterized many late-nineteenth century Protestant denominations often led to a competition to build the first church in town. The first church constructed garnered a certain prestige that helped the congregation attract the undecided in the community. This kind of rivalry, also existed within some denominations, as among the sixteen Lutheran synods that were active in the state. As a result of this competitive church building, South Dakota and the entire Upper Midwest were considered "over churching" by the turn of the century. Subsequent mergers considerably reduced the number of churches.

As denominations grew closer to each other after 1900, and in some cases merged, and as congregants achieved the same social class and status, the differences among denominations became less pronounced and less influenced by ethnic and cultural traditions. National symbolism all but disappeared. In this respect, later South Dakota churches resembled those in other Midwestern states.³

The most common liturgical design for South Dakota's early churches was the nave plan. Churches built according to this plan featured a rectangular form that was typically fronted by a central bell tower or apse. In their definitive study, Building South Dakota, Erpstad and Wood write that "almost all denominations used this form [nave plan] during the early settlement period in South Dakota, especially for first church buildings, and it has come to personify the small rural church on the Dakota plains.

³ David Erpstad and David Wood, *Building South Dakota, A Historical Survey of the State's Architecture to 1945*, South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 1997

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Underwood United Methodist Church
Aurora County, South DakotaSection number 8 Page 5

This plan consists of two basic elements: the nave and the narthex. In its simplest form, the nave contains the congregation, although in many cases the altar is also incorporated into this space. The narthex is the entryway for the church and is often a smaller, square-shaped room that rises into a steeple or bell tower.

Most South Dakota churches were built based on two major plans, each featuring related subtypes utilized by different denominations. The first of these was the ritual, liturgical plan that depended heavily upon ceremonial and liturgical traditions. As a result, variations of the plan have been used by most Christian denominations. Key features of the ritual plan include a nave (main body of the church), chancel (area around altar), and transepts (cross-arms) that are visible from the exterior of the building.

There are three variations of the traditional, ritual plan, the basilica, gothic nave, and nave plans. The basilica plan is the most intricate of the three and its identifying features usually consist of a cruciform floor plan complete with extending transepts, an apse or chancel and two parallel side aisles. Interior design for most basilica plan churches often feature decorative as well as structural columns and arches. In South Dakota (as elsewhere), examples of this type of plan are most often seen in Catholic and Episcopal churches with the most common architectural influence being either the Gothic Revival or Romanesque Revival styles.

The second liturgical variation is the Gothic nave plan. This plan is quite similar to the basilica plan in many respects, however it does not feature side aisles and has only one transept. Like the basilica plan, this form was utilized heavily by both the Episcopal and Catholic churches. The nave plan is the third ritual variation and is identified by the simple rectangular form with single tower that also serves as the narthex, or entrance to the church. It is the most common church design in South Dakota and was utilized almost exclusively by small congregations for their first church or for rural church buildings. When funding was not available to these congregations for the construction of new edifices, additions were made to the existing nave plan at either the rear or side of the building. Due to the relative ease of construction, low building costs, and ability to adapt to various cultural templates, the nave plan was adopted by congregations representing all Protestant and Catholic denominations throughout the state.

South Dakota congregations also utilized another type of plan that is considered a non-ritual, denominational plan. This exclusively American form focuses on the pulpit rather than the altar, thus suggesting a chasm between the old world incongruous influence and the new world reliance on the teachings of the pastor. Like the nave plan, this non-ritual plan could be easily constructed to incorporate cultural templates for various nationalities that settled on the plains of South Dakota. There are two variations to this plan, the first of which is the audience-hall plan that consists of an auditorium built around the pulpit, choir loft, and organ. The location of the pulpit can vary from center-aisle to corner placement which is in large part a response to changing forms of Protestant worship, in which the "geometry of the audience-hall plan has been flexible, taking the form of a square, a rectangle, or intersecting rectangles."⁴ Various Protestant congregations regardless of denominational affiliation have exclusively used this type.⁵

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Megan Edaes, *Churches in South Dakota*, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Pierre, SD 2002

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Underwood United Methodist Church
Aurora County, South DakotaSection number 8 Page 6

A vast number of South Dakota churches, especially the early first generation churches and mission churches, would be best classified as vernacular architecture. The term vernacular refers to the lack of distinctive features, ornamentation, or materials associated with a particular style. *Vernacular architecture* is derived from the people who construct the buildings, not by any specific architectural plans, but by regional patterns. Often referred to as ordinary, common, or plain, this type of architecture is born of necessity and planned for utilitarian purposes. Since decorative features are either absent or very restrained these buildings are commonly identified according to the basic shape and form rather than stylistic elements.

The rectangular shaped, nave-plan buildings that utilized horizontal weatherboard cladding are best described as vernacular adaptations of the Gothic Revival style in that they do incorporate the gothic or lancet arches (windows and doors) and sometimes use carved vergeboards but are otherwise devoid of architectural ornamentation.⁶

History and Significance of the Underwood United Methodist Church

The Underwood United Methodist Church was constructed in 1908 for residents of Patten Township. The church represents the efforts of a handful of ambitious men who wanted a place of worship nearer their farmsteads in Aurora County. Until this endeavor was embarked upon, many of the Patten Township residents had to travel at least ten miles to attend church services of their denominational preference. In preparation for the location of a church in Patten Township, the five leaders, Sam McCormick, Joe Sheldon, Will Breeding, Swan Nelson and John Owen approached the Methodist minister in White Lake to ensure that there would be no conflict or problem proceeding with a plan for the Methodist Church ten miles north of town. With their own plan for raising the money as well as construction of the Church, they proceeded without any objection.

⁶ Ibid

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Underwood United Methodist Church
Aurora County, South DakotaSection number 8 Page 7

Swan Nelson donated the land for the church and the five leaders, along with help from others, constructed the church themselves. It was unanimously decided the church should be called the Underwood Church in honor of the Reverend William Underwood who was the first minister in the White Lake community. In August of 1908, the cornerstone was laid and the Church was officially dedicated in January 1909, debt free. In 1919 the congregation approved a plan to expand the church and by October 1920 the church was re-dedicated, once again debt free.⁷

Although devoid of architectural sophistication, the Underwood Church is a very good example of the type of rural churches that were constructed in South Dakota in the early 1900's shortly after homesteaders had settled in and the railroads had made their way across the state. The vernacular structure of the Underwood Church contains the two basic elements of the Nave plan that accurately depict this style: the nave and the narthex. The nave in the Underwood United Methodist Church also contains the altar, which; most of these early twentieth century rural churches did. The narthex, or the entryway of the Underwood Church, is much smaller than the nave and is located near or under the bell tower, which is typical in this architectural style. The long windows, small bell tower and decorative shingles in the gable on the façade are also representative of these earlier nave plan churches.

The church retains a significant amount of integrity regarding the retention of original materials, workmanship and design. The location of the church remains the same and the surroundings, except for the cemetery expansion and the growth of the tree groves is essentially unchanged, giving it the same feeling and association as it had in 1909.

Conclusion

The Underwood United Methodist Church is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for Architecture. The vernacular structure with the nave plan and bell tower is a fine example of country churches that were built in the early twentieth century in South Dakota shortly after homesteaders claimed the land and during the early years of statehood.

⁷ Dorothy Headley, *Personal Correspondence*, February, 2008

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Underwood United Methodist Church
Aurora County, South DakotaSection number 10 Page 8

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Headley Dorothy, *Personal Correspondence*, February, 2008

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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

Underwood United Methodist Church
Aurora County, South Dakota

Section number 10 Page 9

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

Legal Description: Eight Acres of the Northeast Corner of Patten Township. Range T105 N Range 66W, Aurora County

Boundary Justification

The boundary follows the tract of land historically associated with the church and cemetery.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Underwood United Methodist Church
County, South DakotaSection number 10 Page 10**PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-3_ except as noted:

Name of Property: Underwood United Methodist Church
County and State: Aurora County, South Dakota
Photographer: Mike Vogel
Date of Photographs: 01/30/08
Location of Originals : South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Pierre, SD

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Photographic Information</u>
1	Southwest Underwood United Methodist Church (Underwood United Methodist Church_Aurora County_SD1Tiff)
2	Northeast Underwood United Methodist Church (Underwood United Methodist Church_Aurora County_ SD2Tiff)
3	West Underwood United Methodist Church Cemetery (Underwood United Methodist Church_ Aurora County_SD3Tiff)