

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 ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC MISSION CHURCH

other names/site number Port St. Joe Garden Club

2. Location

street & number 216 8<sup>th</sup> Street N/a  not for publication

city or town Port St. Joe N/A  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Gulf code 045 zip code 32456

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.)

[Signature] 6/23/98  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources  
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]  
Signature of the Keeper

7-31-98  
Date of Action

St. Joesph Catholic Mission Church  
Name of Property

Gulf Co., FL  
County and 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)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	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: church

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: meeting hall

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: frame vernacular

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK  
walls WOOD  
roof FIBERGLASS  
other GLASS

**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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1925

**Significant Dates**

1925

**Significant Person**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

unknown

**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

# \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of Repository \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	6	6	6	4	1	4	0	3	2	9	8	5	8	0
	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 Betty Lewis/Robert O. Jones, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date June 1998

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

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 Port St. Joe Garden Club

street & number 216 8<sup>th</sup> Street, (mail to P.O. Box 243) telephone (850) 229-6005

city or town Port St. Joe state FL zip code 32456

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

**ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC MISSION CHURCH,  
PORT ST. JOE, GULF CO., FL**

**SUMMARY**

St. Joseph Catholic Mission Church is located at 216 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Port St. Joe, Gulf County, Florida. The one-story, rectangular, frame vernacular, 1925 church is built on brick piers. The exterior has horizontal siding, and a steep pitched, front gable roof with fiberglass shingles. The facade has a gabled portico, and a square belfry tower with hipped roof is at the roof ridge above the entrance. Arched windows contain textured clear glass.

**SETTING**

The church fronts northwest onto 8<sup>th</sup> Street which runs east/west. The neighborhood is residential. The church is one-half block from the U.S. Highway 98, which is the north/south thoroughfare, which runs along the waterfront. The city's streets are laid out on a grid arranged along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. The land is flat and sandy, with scattered mature pine and oak trees (Photo #1). The church lot includes ornamental shrubs, dogwood, palm, and cedar trees around the church.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**Exterior**

The brick pier foundation supports walls of horizontal drop siding. Windows had 2/2, double-hung wooden sashes with fixed 2-light arched transoms with textured clear glass. Most of the bottom half of the sashes are currently filled with aluminum double awning windows with plain glass. All eaves overhang and are enclosed with original wood paneling.

The main (north) facade has a gable end, a gable portico, and square tower belfry located on the roof ridge above the door (Photo #2). Three concrete steps with brick cheeks access a porch (Photo #3) which has a wooden baluster handrail. A gable portico is supported by two square, tapered columns with molding capitals. The main double wooden doors have five panels and a four-light arched transom with textured clear glass. A metal historic plaque is to the west of the doors (Photo #4). A circular, louvered vent is within the peak of the gable. A square belfry tower is on the roof, enclosed with horizontal siding, and large rectangular louvered opening on each side. A pyramidal hip roof is on the tower.

The east elevation has four windows, the broad side of the gable roof, and the north end belfry (Photo #5). Two of the lower halves of the

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**ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC MISSION CHURCH,  
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windows contain air conditioning units. One has the double awning sash in the lower half. The window at the south corner has its original arrangement. An "elbow" exhaust pipe protrudes from the wall at the north corner.

The south elevation has a gable end with a centrally located, single door with its original screen door (Photo #6). Four steps access a small wooden porch. A square metal louvered vent is above the door, and a circular louvered vent is within the gable peak.

The east elevation mirrors the arrangement of the west elevation except that all bottom halves of the windows have metal awnings (Photos 7&8).

**Interior**

The interior has five rooms. The main assembly, front room, two storage rooms and bathroom in the rear, and a kitchen partitioned within the front room. Wooden floors are covered with carpet (Photos #9-11). Horizontal panels cover the walls and ceiling. Baseboards, window and door trims have a little molding. Baseboards and trim at the rear of the building are painted dark.

The front, assembly room has three windows on either side, and long florescent lighting fixtures are suspended from the ceiling. A single door is in the south wall. A plywood partition encloses kitchen appliances in the southwest corner to create a kitchen (Photo #12). The original window, walls and ceiling remain within this area. The door in the south wall enters a large storage area with a small storage room and bathroom in the southwest corner. The rear door is centered in the exterior wall.

**ALTERATIONS**

In the 1960s, the Garden Club created a kitchen by running utility connections through the floor, and enclosing a kitchen space with two plywood partitions. The bottom half of most wooden window sashes were replaced with metal awnings. The bathroom was installed. The rear wooden door was replaced with a fireproof door. An oil heater was removed from the northeast corner, and gas one installed. While resurfacing the church roof, three previous layers were removed including the original cedar shake surface.

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PORT ST. JOE, GULF CO., FL**

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**SUMMARY**

The St. Joseph Catholic Mission Church is nominated to the National Register under Criterion C on the local level in the area of Architecture. The city began to develop after 1904, and the 1925 Catholic Mission Church is the oldest remaining church. The vernacular construction is of exceptional quality with several Classical style elements. The level of architectural integrity is high.

**HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT**

Port St. Joe's early history dates to c.1700 when a small Spanish outpost, named St. Joseph, was established near a fresh water creek leading into the St. Joseph's Bay. A small fishing village developed at the site in 1812. In 1836, town promoters built Florida's first steam railroad connecting St. Joseph with the Apalachicola River. This provided transportation for cotton growers in Georgia and Alabama, and set them in competition with Apalachicola. The population of St. Joseph grew to between 5,000-10,000 by 1838.

St. Joseph was selected as the site for the state's first Constitutional Convention, a crucial step in the process of gaining statehood. The Convention began December 3, 1838, and on January 11, 1839, the first Florida Constitution was signed.

A series of disasters put an end to this prosperous community, rendering it a ghost town. In 1840-1841, yellow fever killed approximately 2,500 of the residents. A hurricane hit the community in September, 1844. What little remained was left virtually uninhabited until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1904, Terrell H. Stone moved to the area and settled approximately two miles north of the old St. Joseph's town, and started a turpentine operation. The area he settled became known as Port St. Joe. The abundance of long leaf yellow pine lured other investors. In 1907, a group of businessmen constructed the Apalachicola Northern Railroad running from River Junction to Apalachicola. In 1909, the rail line was run to Port St. Joe, and wharf facilities and a 2500 foot rail pier jutting into the Bay was constructed. Lumber mills, an ice company, electric power and water plants quickly followed. In 1913, the Calhoun Timber Company was incorporated, one of Florida's largest saw mills. In 1920, the population was between 400-500 people.

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PORT ST. JOE, GULF CO., FL**

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In the winter of 1835, Reverend Fitch Waterman Taylor of the Diocese of Maryland founded a Catholic church in Apalachicola and one in St. Joseph, and ministered to both. The church in St. Joseph was short lived, ending with the town. As the new Port St. Joe grew, a visiting priest from Apalachicola would drive over in a Cadillac automobile mounted onto the railroad, and hold religious services in a home. In 1918, lots were purchased for a church, but there was not enough money to build. Visiting priests held religious services in the local Old Port Inn, and a large log building Community House used by the Woman's Club, and Methodist denomination. In 1920, under the Diocese of Mobile, the first official Catholic Mission service was held by Reverend Francis DeSales in the home of Captain and Mrs. Robert Tapper. The church building was completed in 1925.

The church remained in use until 1959, when a new church was built. Pine pews and a white marble altar were moved to the new church. The building was vacant until the Port St. Joe Garden Club purchased it in 1968.

Frame vernacular construction techniques and forms are used by lay or self-taught builders. The industrial revolution permitted a standardization of building materials and parts which exerted a pervasive influence over vernacular house design. Popular magazines disseminated information about building trends and styles throughout the country, and railroads provided affordable distribution of manufactured building products.

**SIGNIFICANCE**

The St. Joseph Mission Catholic Church is the oldest remaining church from the early development of the 20<sup>th</sup> century development of Port St. Joe. The church is an outstanding example of frame vernacular construction, and is built of locally milled lumber. The designer is not known, but local members of the congregation helped construct it, including a Mr. Tapper, Mr. Eells, Mr. Comforter, and a Mr. Buzzett from Apalachicola. The proportions and level of craftsmanship exhibit a high level of skill. The building includes several design elements that reflect a formal and Classical style. Those elements are the central portico with large square but tapered columns with molded capitals; centrally placed belfry with pyramidal roof; arched top transoms over the main door and windows. The non-historic alterations of a kitchen partition, and a bathroom installation, do not obscure the original materials or spatial arrangement.



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The level of historic integrity is high and the building's condition is excellent.

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Florida," August, 1926.

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the Old Town of Saint Joseph," January, 1930.

The Star (newspaper), "The Story of the Old City of St.  
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The Star, "Garden Center has an Interesting History,  
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**ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC MISSION CHURCH,  
PORT ST. JOE, GULF CO., FL**

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**VERBAL PROPERTY DESCRIPTION**

Lots 16, 18, 20, & 22, Block 46, City of Port St. Joe.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary encompasses the property historically associated with the St. Joseph's Mission Catholic Church.

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**PHOTOGRAPH LIST**

1. St. Joseph Catholic Mission Church, 216 8<sup>th</sup> Street,  
Port St. Joe
2. Gulf County, Florida
3. Betty Lewis
4. July 1996
5. Betty Lewis
6. East and north elevations on lot, facing southwest
7. Photo #1 of 12

Items 1-5 the same for the following photographs.

6. Main (north) facade, facing south
7. Photo #2 of 12
  
6. Main entrance, facing south
7. Photo #3 of 12
  
6. Historic plaque beside main door, facing south
7. Photo #4 of 12
  
6. East and south elevations, facing west
7. Photo #5 of 12
  
6. South elevation, facing north
7. Photo #6 of 12
  
6. West elevation, facing north
7. Photo #7 of 12
  
6. Southwest corner, facing northeast
7. Photo #8 of 12
  
6. Interior main room, facing north
7. Photo #9 of 12
  
6. Interior main room, facing south
7. Photo #10 of 12

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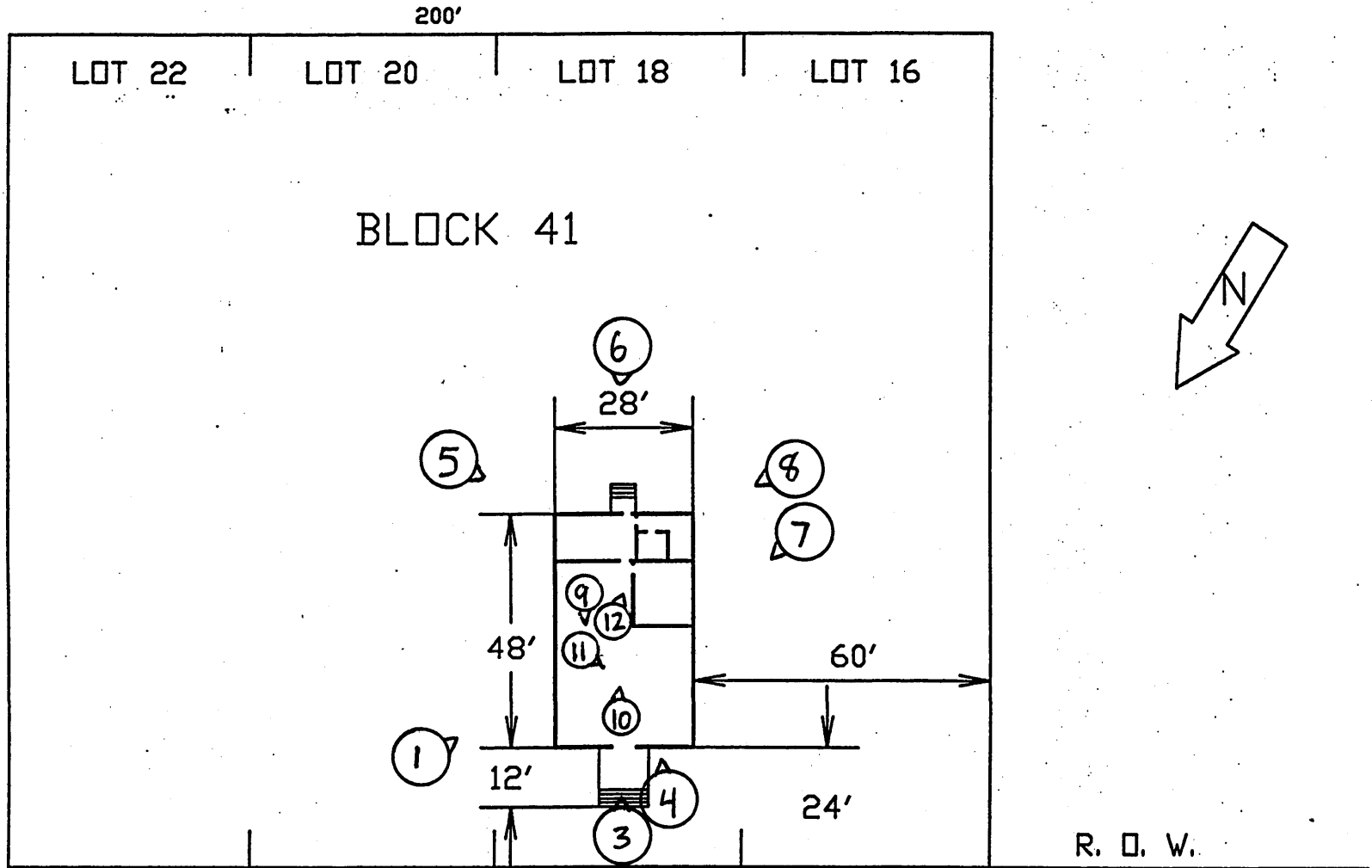
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6. Interior northwest corner, facing northwest

7. Photo #11 of 12

6. Interior kitchen partition and storage area door,  
facing south

7. Photo #12 of 12



ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC MISSION CHURCH  
 AND PROPERTY & PHOTO DIAGRAM  
 CITY OF PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA  
 GULF COUNTY

8TH STREET