

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 96001372 Date Listed: 12/04/96

Property Name: First Congregational Church

County: Hardin State: Iowa

Multiple Name

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

December 4, 1996
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 8. Statement of Significance

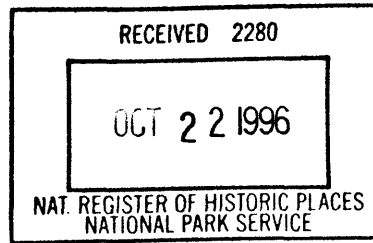
"Religion" is, hereby, deleted as an Area of Significance since Criterion A is not claimed.

Beth Foster, National Register coordinator for the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office, was notified of this change on December 4, 1996

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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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 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 First Congregational Church
other names/site number United Church of Christ

2. Location

street & number 1209-12th Street N/A not for publication
city or town Eldora N/A vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Hardin code 083 zip code 50627

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.)
Tom Morcin 10/14/96
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State of 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.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Linda M. Clelland

12/4/96

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 include 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 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 Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Religious/Religion facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Religion/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian - Romanesque

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Stone

roof Wood/Shingles

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

Religion

Period of Significance

1894

Significant Dates

1894

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Dunham, C.A.

Atkinson, John F.

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:

Official files of the church

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 491194.0 468968.2
Zone Easting Northing

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 Virginia Stiles, 1996 Chair, Congregational Life Board

organization First Congregational Church/UCC date Sept. 18, 1995

street & number 1209-12th Street telephone 515-858-3113

city or town Eldora state Iowa zip code 50627

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 First Congregational Church - United Church of Christ

street & number 1209-12th Street telephone 515-858-3113

city or town Eldora state Iowa zip code 50627

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

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Located adjacent to Eldora's commercial district, a short distance northeast of the Hardin County Courthouse, the First Congregational Church, since its completion in 1894, has been a noteworthy landmark in this central Iowa community. Designed in the Romanesque Revival style by noted Iowa architect Charles Dunham, this building is constructed of hammer dressed limestone quarried at the famous LeGrand quarries in nearby Marshall County. The interior features antique oak and "hard pine" woodwork, and plastered and frescoed walls and ceilings. Except for limited reconfiguration of interior space and updating the church has undergone little alternation, and it possesses a high level of exterior and interior integrity.

While the First Congregational Church - United Church of Christ of Eldora has been a part of the community since the Society was organized in 1868, the structure being discussed in this nomination is that which was constructed in 1893-94, being officially dedicated to the worship of God on April 8, 1894.

The cornerstone was actually placed in April, 1893 as construction on the new stone church began. The exterior of the church has remained virtually unchanged in the last 102 years, though the interior of the church has been updated to accommodate changing trends in heating, cooling and worship.

The church occupies the northwest corner of Block No. 9 and fronts on what were Jefferson and Congregational streets. Those streets were later changed to numbered streets, and the church now sits on the corner of 12th Street and 12th Avenue, it's address is 1209-12th Street.

The structure is 47x90 feet and is built of best LeGrand hammer dressed limestone of uniform thickness. The tower is 12x12 feet and extends 57.5 feet above the top of the cornice line. The door sills and steps are of the best blue stone. The interior of the church is finished in antique oak and "hard pine." The walls and ceilings are plastered and frescoed. Two trusses extend across the ceiling of the auditorium room. These trusses are of "hard pine", the ends lattice work and the center beaded and chamfered work. The original lattice work was changed in a 1967 renovation process, but the trusses remain.

When it was constructed in 1893, the building boasted a complete system of electric lighting throughout the entire structure. At that time, records show, a total of 96 lights were in use.

The auditorium is 45x60 feet and slopes three-fourths of an inch to the foot towards the pulpit, which stands in the southeast corner of the room. The room is carpeted and seated with substantial hard oak seats. Originally, there was seating for

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350 persons in the amphitheatre without bringing in extra chairs. South of the auditorium is the annex 12x25 feet and furnished with couches and chairs for 25 persons. The pulpit is an elevated platform. Back of the pulpit and on a platform two feet high is the place for the choir and organist. To the right is the pastor's study, 12x12 feet. East of the auditorium is the lecture room, 22x35 feet. This room is connected with the auditorium by heavy sliding doors. It is nicely carpeted and seated with chairs and the pulpit is in plain view and can be seen from any part of the room. Entrance is had to the auditorium from the northwest and southwest corners of the church through vestibules and to the lecture room from the north side through a vestibule 16x22 feet. When needed this vestibule can be opened into the auditorium by sliding doors. East of the lecture room vestibule is the reception room with doors opening into the vestibule and lecture room. South of the lecture room is a Sunday school room for the use of the primary classes. It is 12x30 feet. When necessary, the entire first floor of the church can be utilized for the audience and - originally - it could seat over 1,000 people. Today that figure is closer to 350 persons. Reason for this is that the pews were re-aligned to place more space between pews, and a kitchette and office were added in the overflow area.

The basement is devoted to a ladies' parlor 22x22 feet, neatly carpeted. South of this is a dining room 22x33 feet. The kitchen is 12x20 feet and is supplied with ample cupboard room. Entrance to the basement is from the north side of the church, a broad stairway leading from the vestibule to the rooms below.

INTERIOR CHANGES

In 1966, the membership of the First Congregational Church of Eldora voted to approve a fund-raising effort which would be used for a program of redecorating, repairing and remodeling. The actual rehabilitation of the sanctuary was completed in 1967, with a dedication ceremony held at that time.

The general appearance of the church interior was changed, but the structure was not. The room just south of the main auditorium, which was a parlor, was turned into the choir loft, where the choir and organ are now located and from where they perform for each Sunday service. New carpet was in place, with the pastor's study remaining in that same location until 1993 when it was made a secretary's office. The pastor's study, which permits a more private atmosphere is located in part of the

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Sunday school room, located to the south of the fellowship room. The rest of that area was turned into a kitchenette for serving of receptions and social events. The pocket doors of antique oak remain in use today, and the original fireplace is still located in that room, though it is not used at the present time. Changes were also made in the last few decades in the downstairs kitchen area to update needed appliances and equipment. At that time, the ladies' parlor was turned into Sunday school rooms to accommodate a growing congregation. There is a constant effort for both levels of the church to be maintained.

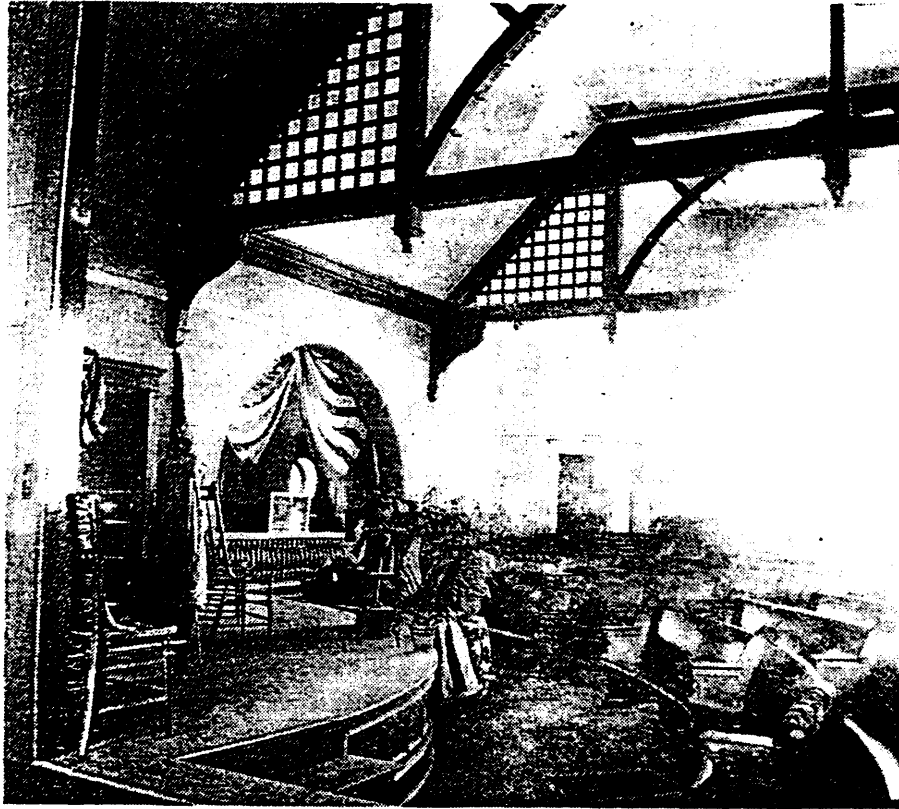
The stained glass windows remain much as they did 102 years ago when they were selected in the initial construction. During a hail storm in 1980, small portions of the windows were damaged and had to be replaced. At that time a Lexan panel was placed on the exterior of the windows to protect them from further hail damage. Because of their age, the church council is attempting to prepare a fund which will permit full restoration of the existing stained glass windows.

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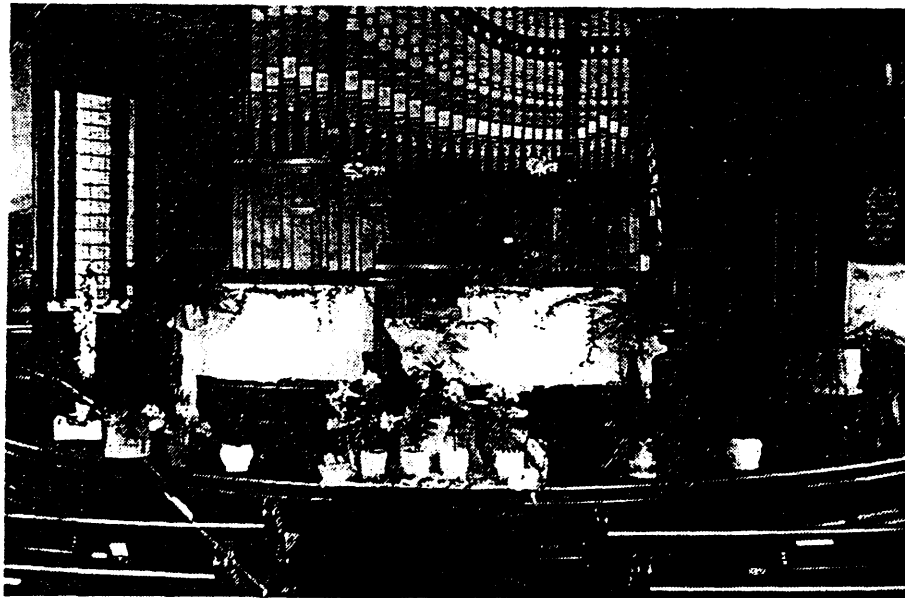
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Interior Views, Existing Church Before 1967 Renovation.



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Photo of First Congregational Church, Eldora, taken in 1894



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The First Congregational Church is locally significant under Criterion C as a well-executed example of Romanesque Revival ecclesiastical design and as an excellent example of the design skills of Burlington architect Charles Dunham, one of the state's leading architects in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Dunham's influence extended far beyond Iowa's borders due to his extensive practice in surrounding states and publication of his designs in national periodicals like Scientific American, American Architect and Building News, and Carpentry and Building. Church design was one of his specialties, and he designed sanctuaries for virtually every mainline Protestant denomination. This church is one of four designed by Dunham known to be extant, and its exterior is strikingly similar to Dunham's First Congregational Church in Burlington, completed in 1870. Both have a similar form and arrangement of exterior features and are constructed of similar stone, but Gothic Revival motifs are utilized for window and door openings for the Burlington church while the Romanesque is used for Eldora.

The first Congregational Church service of record in Eldora was when the Rev. Oliver Emerson was in Eldora and preached to a few families in the area in 1859. On January 20, 1868, when a meeting was held in the courthouse in the evening with Rev. H. Graves of Iowa Falls presiding and the Rev. C.F. Boynton of Ohio preaching.

On January 21, 1868, a meeting was held in the same place and the First Congregational Church of Eldora was organized. The courthouse was the only room in town available for church meetings and worship. The church felt the need to have a home of its own in which to worship so decided to build. A small frame chapel was commenced on November 27, 1868 on the center west lot of the present school grounds.

During the ministry of Rev. Ariel Baker, who served from November, 1874 until October, 1876, another new church was built and dedicated. The new building was dedicated on March 7, 1875, for which the ladies had purchased pews costing \$450.

During the pastorate of Rev. Evarts Kent, who came from Atlanta, Georgia, October, 1889, Julia Wisner donated \$10,000 to build a new church and \$5,000 for a new organ in memory of her son, George Hatch Wisner. A provision of Mrs. Wisner's gift was that a stone building be erected to cost not less than \$20,000 - and that the church contribute the remaining amount.

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The article which appeared in the February 23, 1893, edition of the Eldora Herald said, "At a meeting held at the Congregational church Monday night it was decided to build a new church the following season. A committee was appointed, an architect was telegraphed for and the work of building will be pushed forward vigorously. Mrs. Julia A. Wisner heads the subscription with the magnificent sum of \$10,000 and promises to present the church with a fine pipe organ as memorial to the memory of her son, George. The society expects to erect an edifice to cost at least \$20,000. The new building will be erected on the present church site. The society had been talking of building an annex for social purposes and when this came to the knowledge of Mrs. Wisner, who is a member of the church, she made the above offer as an inducement to build a new church instead of destroying the symmetry of the old building by annexes."

Eldora, as a county seat community was showing tremendous growth in that time period of the late 19th century. In 1891, the Methodist congregation built a new structure, and in 1892, the historic Hardin County Courthouse was constructed. Eldora had previously won a struggle to keep the courthouse in this community in a close election with the city of Iowa Falls. Three other elections with other communities had also been in Eldora's favor. Having the edifice finally constructed and dedicated brought to a close the continuous battle of where the building would be located. Also, in 1892, the Wisner Opera House was constructed across the street from the Hardin County Courthouse and dedicated. Eldora was also the cultural and religious center of the county at that time. The Wisner family was the wealthiest family in the community and was very active in the Congregational faith. The appearance of the courthouse, constructed by J. F. Atkinson was admired by all, and it was Mrs. Wisner who made the decision to hire Charles Dunham as architect for the church structure and to hire Atkinson's firm as contractor. She was a knowledgeable woman whose wealth made it possible for her to make such recommendations.

The present building was dedicated on April 8, 1894, having cost \$21,500, exclusive of the organ. It is interesting to note that Mrs. Wisner died before the actual construction of the building could begin. The structure was designed after that of the Hardin County Courthouse, which was built by J.F. Atkinson of Marshalltown.

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ELDORA HERALD: February 23, 1893
August 10, 1893
August 17, 1893
August 24, 1893
October 5, 1893
October 19, 1893
November 2, 1893
November 30, 1893
December 14, 1893
December 28, 1893
January 4, 1894
January 11, 1894
March 8, 1894
March 22, 1894
March 29, 1894
April 5, 1894
April 12, 1894

PLUS: The official minutes of the board of the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Eldora

PHOTO REFERENCES: Those photographs shown in Section 7, Pages 4 and 5 are in the archives of the church, taken by a local professional photographer of the 1890s.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Lot 3, Block 9, Original Town

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

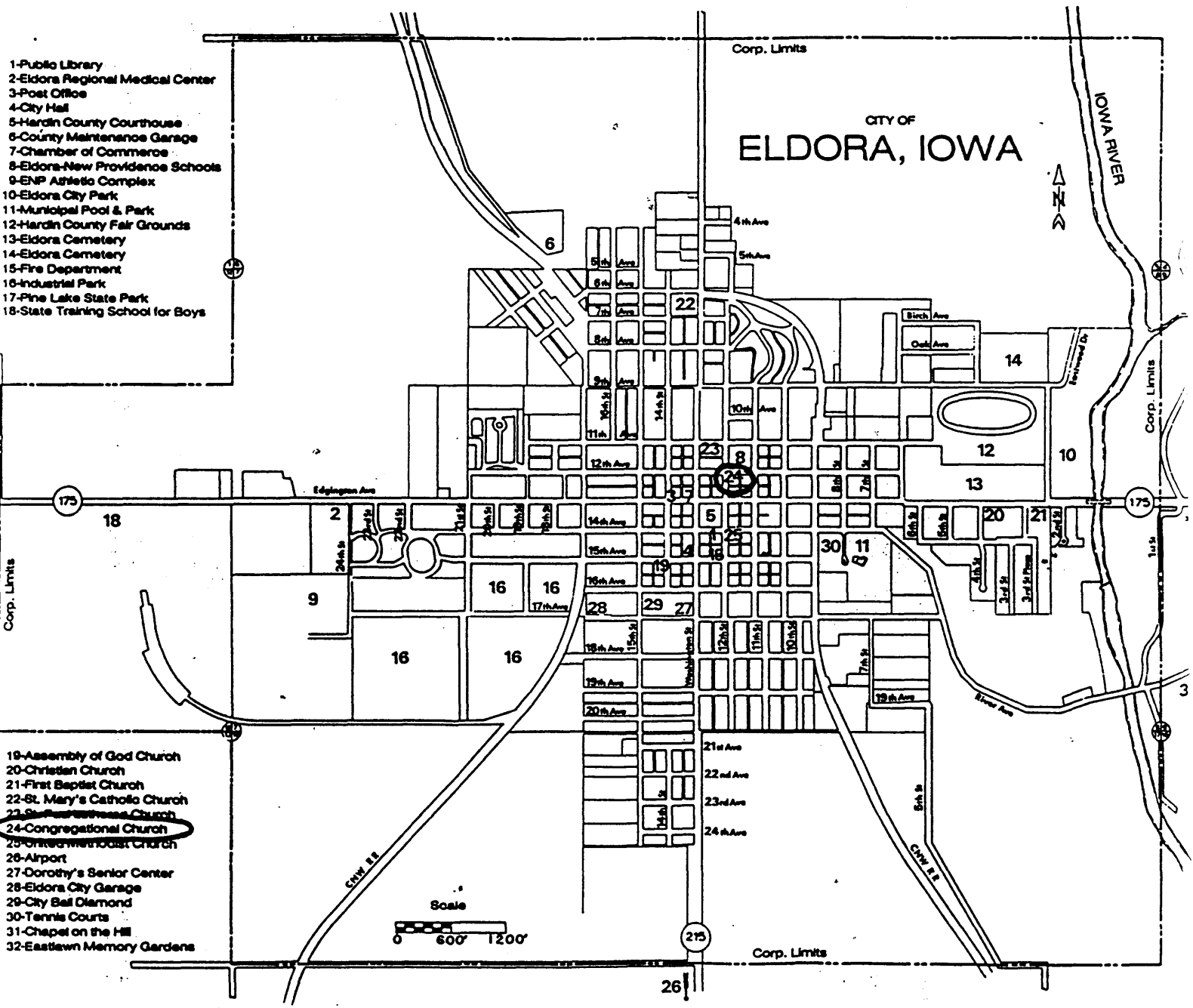
Includes only the property on which the church stands.

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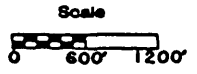
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- 2-Eldora Regional Medical Center
- 3-Post Office
- 4-City Hall
- 5-Hardin County Courthouse
- 6-County Maintenance Garage
- 7-Chamber of Commerce
- 8-Eldora-New Providence Schools
- 9-ENP Athletic Complex
- 10-Eldora City Park
- 11-Municipal Pool & Park
- 12-Hardin County Fair Grounds
- 13-Eldora Cemetery
- 14-Eldora Cemetery
- 15-Fire Department
- 16-Industrial Park
- 17-Pine Lake State Park
- 18-State Training School for Boys

- 19-Assembly of God Church
- 20-Christian Church
- 21-First Baptist Church
- 22-St. Mary's Catholic Church
- 23-St. Paul's Methodist Church
- 24-Congregational Church**
- 25-United Methodist Church
- 26-Airport
- 27-Dorothy's Senior Center
- 28-Eldora City Garage
- 29-City Ball Diamond
- 30-Tennis Courts
- 31-Chapel on the Hill
- 32-Eastawn Memory Gardens

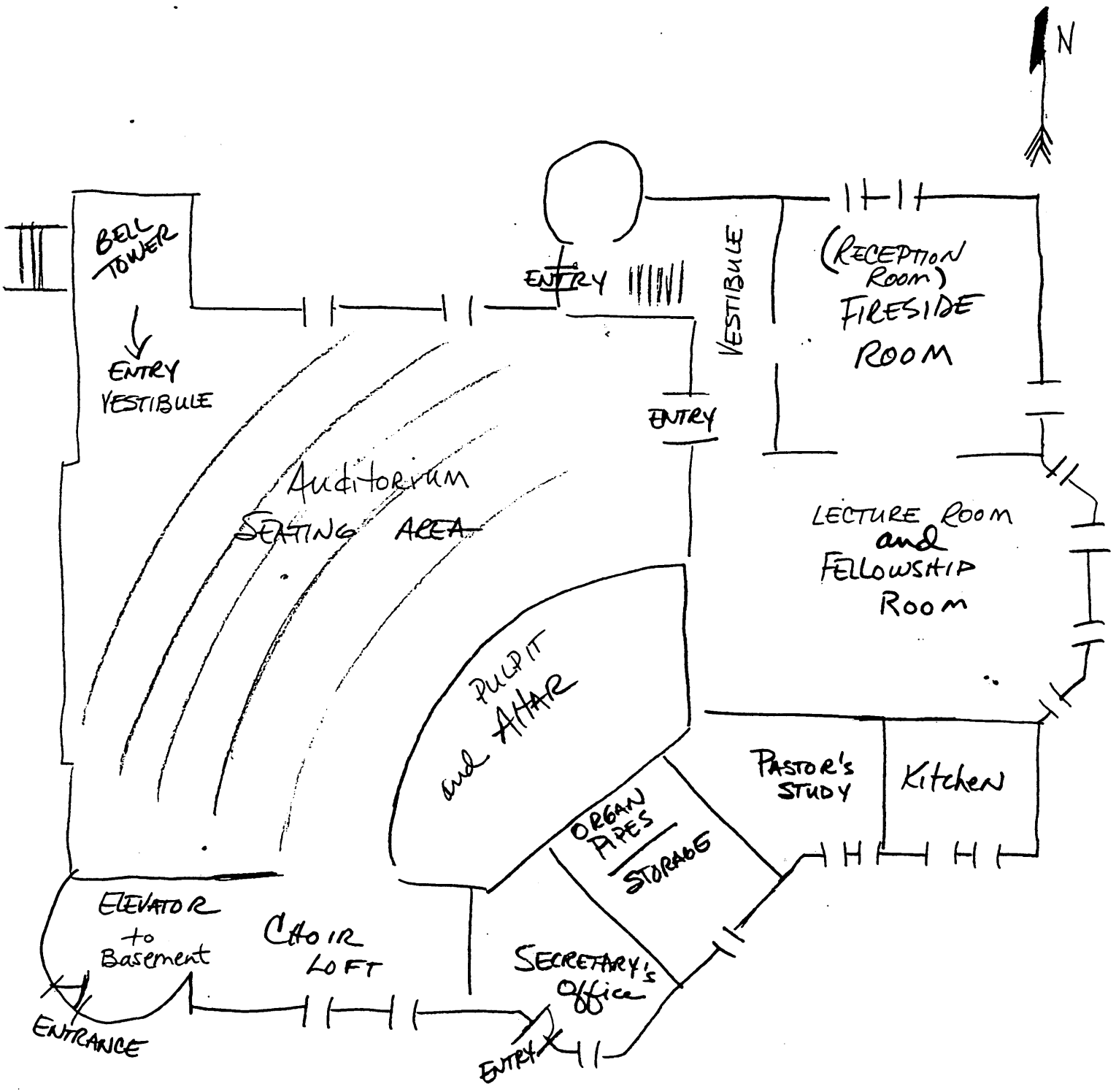


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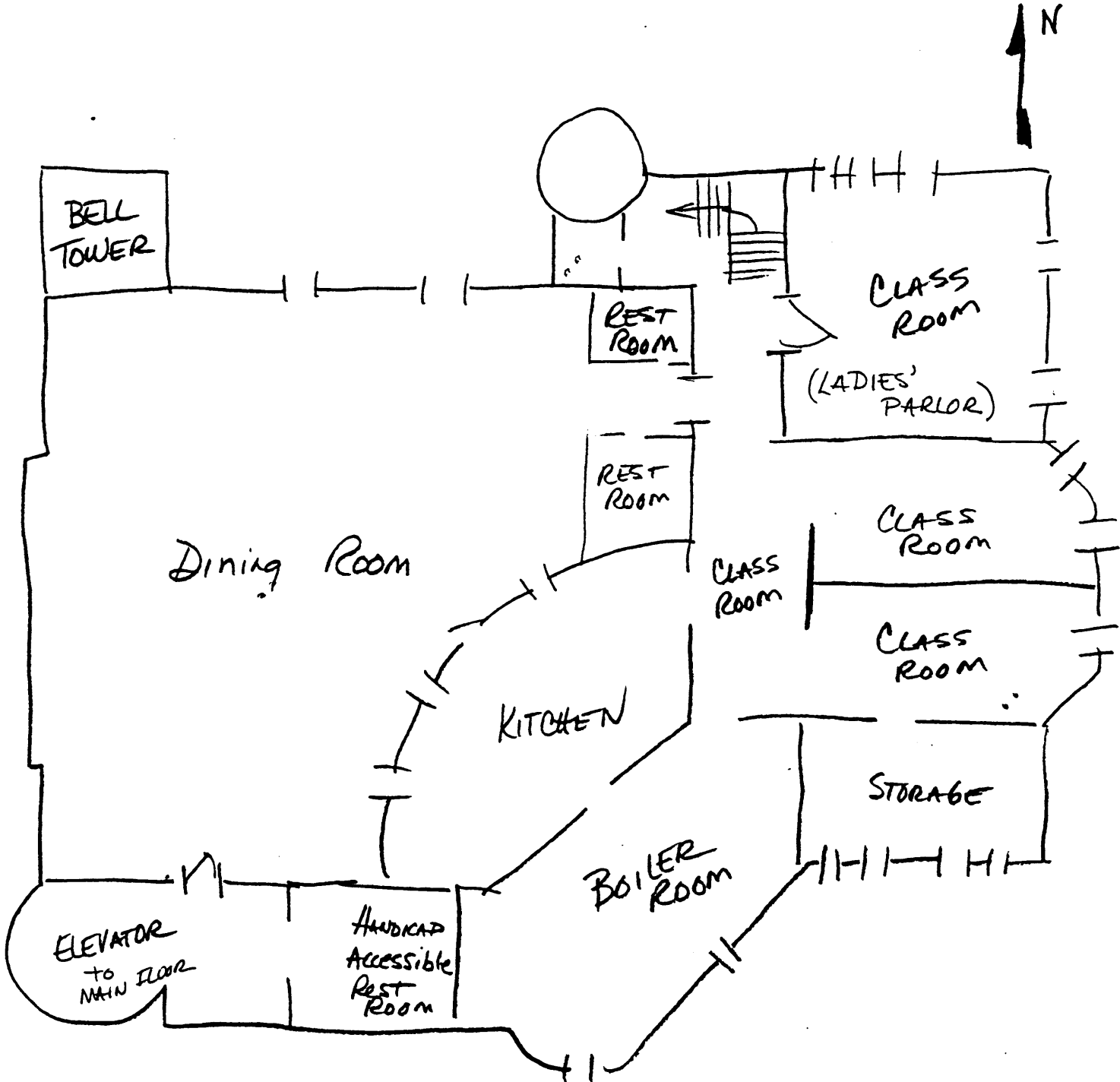
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BASEMENT