United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic   St. John's German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Walhalla

and/or common   St. John's Lutheran Church (preferred)

2. Location

street & number   301 West Main Street   ___ not for publication

city, town   Walhalla   ___ vicinity of   congressional district   Third

state   South Carolina   code   045   county   Oconee   code   073

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	_X_ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
_X_ building(s)	_X_ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	_x_ religious
___ object	___ in process	_X_ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name   St. John's Lutheran Church

street & number   301 West Main Street

city, town   Walhalla   ___ vicinity of   state   South Carolina 29691

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.   Oconee County Courthouse

street & number   West Main Street

city, town   Walhalla   state   South Carolina 29691

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title   Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina   has this property been determined elegible?   ___ yes   _X_ no

date   1972   ___ federal   _X_ state   ___ county   ___ local

depository for survey records   South Carolina Department of Archives and History

city, town   Columbia   state   South Carolina 29211

7. Description

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated in downtown Walhalla, South Carolina, at 301 West Main Street, St. John's Lutheran Church is a frame interpretation of the German vernacular church form. It was constructed between 1859 and 1861 under the direction of John Kaufmann, master builder from Baden, Germany, for the German Lutheran congregation of Walhalla.

Exterior: St. John's Lutheran Church is rectangular in shape, with a tower centered on the facade. An arched entrance with an archivolt door surround is at the base of the tower. Two arched windows of stained glass flank the tower. A small rose window and a round headed window are located in the first stage of the tower, above the door. A molding projecting from the juncture of tower and gable roof separates the two stages of the tower. The upper stage of the tower has blind bulls-eyes and triple arched louvers on all four elevations. An octagonal broach spire with flared base terminates the tower. The pyramidal composition of the tower and the body of the church is repeated in the fenestration of the facade.

East and west elevations are five bays wide. The arched windows have pronounced moldings with keystones. Three arched windows are employed on the rear (south elevation) of the church, which is connected via a walkway to a modern education building. A Sunday School building occupies the western segment of the site and is joined to the church by a brick arcade.

Interior: The interior of St. John's has a stained glass panel in the anteroom behind the main entrance. Entrance to the nave is through double leaf, round headed doors placed on the east and west walls of the antechamber. Two aisles divide the nave into three sections, with paneled wooden pews. At the south end of the interior is the pulpit which is "of the style used by the High Church of Germany and (is) built of 'twisted wood.' It is (attached to) the foundation of the Church and is raised above the altar." Behind the altar are three stained glass windows with semicircular arches and double leaf doors inset in the bottom half of the windows flanking the pulpit.

A choir loft at the north end of the church is accessible via quarter turn staircases at either side. A large arched enclosure surrounds the organ, at the center of the loft, while a paneled rail embellished with six depressed arches spans the width of the church at the front of the loft. Massive cantilevered brackets support the loft, and the depressed arches are repeated below the loft, between the piers framing the staircases and the narthex.

The ceiling has an elliptical vault with a crown molding defining the wall surface from the ceiling. Due to its height the early heating system consisted of "two large stoves, with stove pipe extending almost the length of the church." Supplementary heat was provided by "keeks," small, portable boxes "with drawers for live coals."

Structurally, St. John's Lutheran Church is an unusual example of braced frame construction. The roof consists of rafters connected at the apex by a ridge pole, which is supported by a succession of posts throughout its length. Posts are joined to the ridge pole by "Y" braces. A large twelve by twelve beam rests on the ceiling joists and is situated directly beneath the ridge pole and is the foundation for the posts. Lateral thrust is controlled by a system of collar beams with additional braces. Ceiling joists are constructed in three parts, the shorter east and west sections set at an upward angle. These are joined by a long middle joist, thus allowing for the vaulted ceiling. Diagonal

Continued

8. Significance

Period

____ prehistoric
____ 1400–1499
____ 1500–1599
____ 1600–1699
____ 1700–1799
__X 1800–1899
____ 1900–

Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

____ archeology-prehistoric
____ archeology-historic
____ agriculture
__X architecture
____ art
____ commerce
____ communications

____ community planning
____ conservation
____ economics
____ education
____ engineering
____ exploration/settlement
____ industry
____ invention

____ landscape architecture
____ law
____ literature
____ military
____ music
____ philosophy
____ politics/government

__X religion
____ science
____ sculpture
____ social/
humanitarian
____ theater
____ transportation
__X other (specify)
local history

Specific dates 1859-61   **Builder/Architect** John Kaufmann

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

St. John's German Lutheran Church is located at 301 West Main Street in downtown Walhalla, South Carolina. Constructed between the years of 1859 and 1861 by John Kaufmann, the church is significant as a frame interpretation of a German vernacular church form, as influenced by the Victorian medieval revival trends. The church is also significant for its role in the religious history of Walhalla.

In 1848, a group of German immigrants formed the German Colonization Society in Charleston, South Carolina, with their purpose to settle in the South Carolina Piedmont. Under the leadership of John A. Wagener, Charleston's most renowned citizen of German origin, the Colonization Society purchased land from Col. Joseph Gresham in what was then known as the Pickens District. Settlement followed and in 1853 St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church was formally organized and consisted of thirty-eight members. Six years later on January 21, 1859, the members resolved to start construction of St. John's. Under the direction of John Kaufmann, master builder, the church was erected with the help of the congregation. Completed on March 17, 1861, the church has been in continuous use since that time and presently retains a membership of approximately 250 individuals.

Religion: In its capacity as a religious organization, St. John's fostered Newberry College between the years of 1868 and 1877. The college, a Lutheran institution located in Newberry, South Carolina, had suffered severe financial setbacks because of investments in Confederate bonds. After the conclusion of the Civil War, the college buildings were sold to pay debts. St. John's with the general approval of the congregation set aside a building for the school, and in 1868 Newberry College and its president, Reverend Dr. J. P. Smeltzer, moved to Walhalla. To accommodate the professors and students, Reverend Smeltzer instituted English language services. After the departure of the college in 1877 the English Lutheran congregation was ultimately absorbed into St. John's.

One of the first Lutheran Churches in the Piedmont of South Carolina, St. John's gave encouragement to the establishment of the New Bethlehem Lutheran Church of Anderson in 1876, and in the early part of the twentieth century it assisted in the formation of Trinity Lutheran Church of Greenville. At various times during the church's history (1868, 1886, 1916) it hosted the annual conventions of the South Carolina Lutheran Synod.

The church also has associations with a prominent Lutheran minister, Reverend John P. Smeltzer. Smeltzer, a supplemental pastor at St. John's, was president of Newberry College before and during its interim in Walhalla. Smeltzer "organized an English Lutheran Church to accommodate the professors and students in Walhalla and St. John's granted them the use of the German church." When Newberry College left Walhalla in 1877, the Reverend remained and created the Walhalla Female College. He helped to organize the New Bethlehem Lutheran Church congregation on September 16, 1876, and was the president and vice-president of the South Carolina Lutheran Synod in 1872 and 1882, respectively.

Continued

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property __3.5__

Quadrangle name __Walhalla, S.C.__   Quadrangle scale __1:24000__

UMT References

A |1|7| |3|1|0|5|8|0| |3|8|4|8|7|6|0| B |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_|_|
   Zone   Easting   Northing   Zone   Easting   Northing

C |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_|_| D |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_|_|

E |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_|_| F |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_|_|

G |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_|_| H |_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_| |_|_|_|_|_|_|_|

Verbal boundary description and justification The boundary of the St. John's Lutheran Church nomination is shown as the red line on the accompanying Oconee County tax map entitled "Map No. 160-4" and drawn at a scale of 100 feet to the inch. The nominated property includes all significant buildings and structures.

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Charles Lowe
Historical Programs Section

organization S.C. Department of Archives & History   **date** August 14, 1980

street & number P.O. Box 11,669, Capitol Station   **telephone** (803) 758-5816

city or town Columbia   **state** South Carolina 29211

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national   ____ state   _X_ local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Charles E. Lee*

title Charles E. Lee
State Historic Preservation Officer   **date** 9/25/80

For HCRS use only
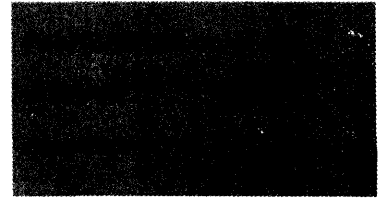I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

W. Ray Luce

Keeper of the National Register   **date** 11/24/80

Attest: **date** 11/21/80

beams extend from each corner of the attic and rest on the joists, giving added stability. The tower and steeple employ four fifteen by sixteen beams approximately sixty feet in length. These are secured by cross braces connecting the four principle uprights. A scaffolding of massive beams is the foundation for the steeple.
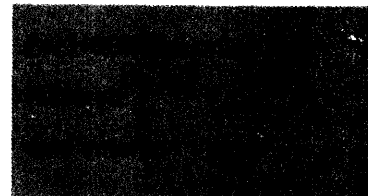
A brick Sunday School building, with gable roof, was built in 1931-32 to the west of the church. It is connected to the church by a brick arcade. A brick and concrete Parish House was built, to the south of the church, in 1969-71.

The church cemetery was established during the first years of the settlement of Walhalla. The earliest gravestone is dated 1851.

Surroundings: The church is situated on the fringes of Walhalla's commercial district; however, since it occupies a large northwest corner lot, surrounding buildings of different or intrusive architectural character do not impinge on it. The presence of a large tree lined median on West Main Street also visually isolates the church from its relatively modern surroundings.

**United States Department of the Interior
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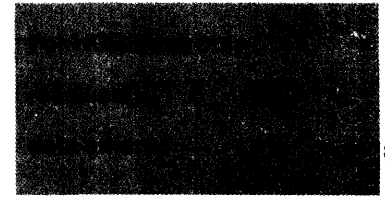**Continuation sheet**   Item number   8   Page   2

Local History: A number of the charter members of the congregation of St. John's
were members of the German Colonization Society, the organization responsible for
the development of Walhalla. Selected from this same group came three intendants, five town
wardens, and one state senator, all of which indicates that St. John's German
Evangelical Lutheran Church had a socially and politically influential congregation,
who actively participated in the founding and management of the town of Walhalla.

Architecture: St. John's Lutheran Church is architecturally significant for its
translation of the vernacular German church into frame construction. The broach
spire with the low flared base, and the central tower, projecting from the facade,
are elements common to German church architecture from the medieval era to the
nineteenth century. The pulpit of "twisted wood" is of the style used by the High
German Church. Structurally, the complex arrangement of trusses, collar beams, and
braces which support and stabilize the tower, are significant as evidence of the builder's
competence.

Columbia, S.C. South Caroliniana Library. "Centennial Celebration: St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Walhalla,South Carolina, 1853-1953," 1953, pp. 6, 15, 21.

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History of the Synod Committee, eds. A History of the Lutheran Church in South Carolina. Columbia, S.C.: R. L. Bryan Co., Printers, 1971, pp. 45, 46, 316, 544-546, 716, 832, 887-888.

Jaynes, R. T. History of Walhalla. Keowee Courier, 1950, reprint ed., n.p., 1950, pp. 13, 33-36, 39-41.

Reynolds, Emily Bellinger and Faunt, Joan Reynolds, comps. Biographical Directory of the Senate of the State of South Carolina, 1776-1964. Columbia, S.C.: Department of Archives and History, 1964, pp. 180, 342.

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