

**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. Leo's Catholic Church

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 124 West Broadway N/A not for publication

city, town Lewistown N/A vicinity of congressional district Second

state Montana code 030 county Fergus code 027

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Roman Catholic Bishop, Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, a corporation sole

street & number Box 1399

city, town Great Falls ___ vicinity of state Montana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Fergus County Courthouse

street & number 712 Main Street

city, town Lewistown state Montana 59457

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

St. Leo's Church is a roman cross plan building located at the corner of Broadway and Second Avenue North, one block from Main Street in Lewistown, Montana. Designed by the well-known Montana architectural firm of Link and Haire, it is a fine example of Italian Early Christian style combined with elements of the later Italian Romanesque. Complete with a 95-foot campanile or bell tower to the left of the entry and incorporated into the building's facade, the design also utilizes such motifs as blind arcading, rose windows and exterior buttressing common to churches of the Romanesque period in Italy.

A unified and distinguished design, the church's brick masonry construction is highly detailed and ornamented with features historically consistent with the masonry of Early Christian and Romanesque periods. Particularly noteworthy is the variety of brick blind arcading and the various patterning in brick on both the facade and the side elevations (see photos). These details include basket weave, diagonal, and vertical bonding patterns. This masonry is highlighted by case terracotta of a more decorative nature near the entry doors and the upper portion of the campanile. In addition, small dentil mouldings and large dentil cornices appear in the low-pitched gable ends of the building as well as along the lateral sides. Corbeled and decorated wooden beams project from the gable ends and sides of the building and emphasize the roof structure.

The basement is of reinforced concrete and the walls of vitrified Lewistown brick trimmed with buff terra cotta. All major types of bonding are used. These and a variety of decorative brick patterns add to the beauty of the exterior. The raked joint system sets off the brick to excellent advantage. The gabled roof is of steel construction.

Concrete steps lead up to the main entrance of Broadway where three sets of doors open into the narthex. The narthex is large and above it is the choir gallery which may be reached by a stairway in the bell tower to the right on entering. The gallery is separated from the nave by a carved railing. To the left of the narthex is the baptistry, located within the tower and having doors into both narthex and nave. This area is now used as a reconciliation room.

The main floor is 76½ feet from the inside entrance to the altar railing. The nave has an arched ceiling 45 feet high and is flanked on both sides by the transepts in which the confessionals are located. The pew seating capacity is 440.

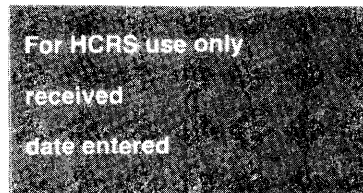
The sanctuary is in the form of a half circle with a domed ceiling. The sacristies are located at each side of the apse with a private passageway connecting them at the rear.

The interior is finished in oak and the walls are decorated in keeping with the Romanesque style. A description of the original windows could not be obtained but the current windows are stained glass and in excellent condition.

On Second Avenue there is another entrance, near the rear of the building. It has doors leading into the front of the nave and into the main sacristy. A rear entranceway has been added (probably before the church was finished) and provides entry both to the basement and to the passageway connecting the sacristies. Another doorway slightly below grade on the parking lot side enters the stairway of the bell tower allowing access to the basement, the narthex and the choir gallery.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

In the basement, the boiler room and the engineer's area are in the rear. At the opposite end are toilets and a storage room. The church basement served as a grade school from 1916 until the new school was completed in 1938. Some basement classrooms were used through 1960 when the high school building was ready for occupancy. The main part of the basement is now divided into one large hall and several smaller rooms. Plans are underway to make it even more functional for a variety of parish uses.

In December of 1944, forty-two elm pews (16 feet long) were installed; these are still in use today. At one time there was a reed organ in the church and in May of 1948 this was sold to the M. P. Moller Company who in August of that same year installed a walnut portable pipe organ with detached console, blower, and Deagan style D chimes of 21 bells.

In 1953, the Conrad Pickel Studio of Waukesha, Wisconsin, put in 26 stained-glass windows using blown imported and domestic antique glass. The eight nave windows depict events in the life of Christ; the transept windows on the right are dedicated to St. Leo and the three on the left show the Blessed Virgin. The three rose windows have a display of color and the three transom windows, the four baptistry windows and the two sanctuary windows all utilize appropriate symbols.

In 1930 a new roof was put on and at some time (date unknown) the main doors were replaced. In 1963 and 1976 exterior repair work was done. An entrance ramp was constructed in 1980 to the left of the Broadway doors. It is almost totally concealed by the blue spruce trees which were planted in the late 1940's.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates October 15, 1916 **Builder/Architect** Link & Haire, Architects

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

St. Leo's Church is architecturally and historically significant because it is a unique example in Montana of the Italian Early Christian Style and was designed by Link & Haire, renowned local/regional architects. J. G. Link and C. S. Haire in partnership, and individually designed a great many of Montana's major public buildings, institutional edifices and prominent residences. St. Leo's was constructed in 1915-16 during a period characterized by population expansion and a building boom in Lewistown. The decoration and furnishing of the edifice was carried on over the years so that aspects of history can be read in the evolution of the structure.

The townsite of Lewistown was laid out in 1882, and by 1887 a small frame church had been built to serve the Catholics among the French-Canadians, Crees, Red River Indians and white settlers who made their home in the area. Priests from St. Peter's Mission, 140 miles west of Lewistown, and later, pastors from Fort Benton and Great Falls celebrated Mass at this church. The first resident pastor was appointed July 4, 1893, and others followed until 1906 when Rev. Victor J. Van den Broeck was appointed.

During the decade from 1907-1917, growth in Lewistown--and all of Montana--was considerable. The Montana Railroad was extended into Lewistown from the Northern Pacific at Lombard during 1903. The Chicago-Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad in 1907 and the Burlington Railroad by 1913 had built their routes in Fergus County. The Great Northern was also active in 1911 when a Fergus County Argus article stated, "The railways have within the past few weeks revealed our real destiny to us and there can no longer be doubt that Lewistown is to become a big city, the chief railway center of the state, and important industrial and wholesale point with Montana's great granary, the Judith basin, all tributary to it in one way or another."

The Polk County directories show that Lewistown's population increased from 3,400 in 1908 to 9,600 in 1918. For the year ending June 30, 1914, more filings were made in the Lewistown land office than in any other land office in the United States. Building operations increased and in 1913 they were not expected to keep up with the demand. "During 1913, Chicago broke its own record in building" but "Lewistown spent nearly \$8 to \$1 as compared with Chicago, on its building operations."¹

With the city's growth and development, the construction of a new Catholic church was an urgent concern for the Catholic community. The largest Catholic population was recorded in 1915 and 1916.

On April 22, 1915, the building committee of Father Van de Broeck, P. J. Osweiler, Timothy Crowley, R. Baker, William Abel, John Brooks, and Art d'Autremont decided to begin construction of the church as rapidly as possible.

¹

Fergus County Argus, March 6, 1914, p. 1

9. Major Bibliographical References

Fergus County Argus (Years 1909-1917, 1922 and 1929)
 Fergus County Democrat (Years 1915 and 1916)
 The Democrat-News (November and December, 1916)
 Indian and White in the Northwest, Palladino, L.B., 1922

St. Leo's Church Archives,
 folder #16

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Lewistown, Montana

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A

1	2
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6	1	9
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6	2	5
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5	2	1	3
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5	0	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

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 Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at the intersection of Main Street and First Avenue, and run thence north 43°40' west 312 feet; thence south 46°20' west 139.7 feet for point of beginning; from thence run north 84°18' west 31.4 feet; thence north 27°13' west 81.8 feet; (continued)

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ellen, Mary, and Johanna Rickl, Research Team

organization St. Leo's Parish date January 6, 1980

street & number 401 West Evelyn (Box 896) telephone (406) 538-3944

city or town Lewistown state Montana 59457

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

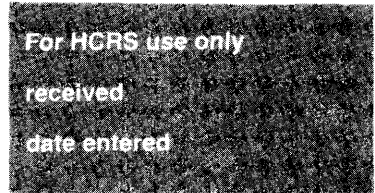
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Marcella Steffy

title Deputy SHPO date 3-25-80

**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

Only one local contractor responded to the first call for bids in June and a new call was issued after minor changes were made in the plans drawn up by Link & Haire. On July 15, 1915, the contract was awarded to the Lewistown firm of Stanton & Smith on its bid of \$45,787. Work began on July 21, 1915, with a large group of men. E. J. Bryan of Link & Haire was the superintendent in charge and Father Van den Broeck was also on the job.

By September 16th the reinforced concrete portion had been completed and in early October the full basement was nearly excavated. This had not been considered feasible at first because the architects were afraid the building site was too swampy. The brick work followed, with cement rather than brick laying lime being used. The dark vitrified variety of brick used in the building was produced by the Lewistown Brick & Tile Company. This industry, incorporated in 1911, was noted for the high quality of its products.

On Sunday, October 15, 1916, the first service was held in the new St. Leo's Church. Bishop Mathias Lenihan of Great Falls dedicated the edifice on Sunday, November 12, 1916.

Completion and dedication of the structure did not, however, mean that the work was finished, for the decorating and furnishing was and is an ongoing process. The origin of the confessionals is unknown, but they are believed to be the oldest furnishings in the church. In 1934, under the then pastor, T. O. Rocque, the interior was painted and decorated with murals. Asphalt tiling was laid on the floor at an undetermined date.

In 1953 when Father P. J. Treacy was pastor, the Liskowiak Studios of Milwaukee was contracted to completely redecorate the interior of the church with all gilding in 23 karat gold leaf, replace the altars with three white oak altars, install two sections of white oak communion railing, furnish and install four hand carved German Lindenwood statues (5 feet high) and install a set of carved wood stations (imported). Altar furnishings were also purchased and the pews refinished at the same time. Acoustical tile and new lighting units were put in.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

OFFICE OF THE SUPERVISOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 2

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

thence north 22°9' east 101.8 feet; thence north 80°54' west 70.9 feet; thence south 46°20' west along the south side of Washington Street 249.4 feet; thence south 43°40' east along the east side of Second Avenue 200 feet; thence north 46°10' east along the north side of Broadway Street 195.3 feet to the point of beginning.