Form 10-300 (Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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COUNTY:

Rock

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200000	AND/OR HISTORIC: First Congregation	al Church							
6	LOCATION	0.0201							ļ
	STREET AND NUMBER:		<u> </u>						
	801 Bushnell Stree	t			CONCERCO	DNAL DISTRICT:		_	
	Beloit				First	JNAL DISTRICT:			}
	STATE			CODE	COUNTY:		COD)F	
	Wisconsin 53511			55	Rock		105		
3.	CLASSIFICATION								
	CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNER	SHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBL	- 1	
	District K Building	☐ Public		Acquisiti		▼ Occupied	Yes:		
	Site Structure	X Private □ Both	[∏ In Prod	ess Considered	Unoccupied	☐ Unrestricted		
	☐ Object	L) Both	Ĺ	Being	Considered	Preservation work	□ No		
		1				, in progress			-
	PRESENT USE (Check One or M		Park						ł
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			Relig		_			_	
•	☐ Entertainment ☐ Mu		Scien		_			_	
4.	OWNER OF PROPERTY								
	First Congregations	al Church of	Belo	it				Wisconsin	T A T
	STREET AND NUMBER:							00	ίį
	801 Bushnell Street							nsi	
	CITY OR TOWN: Beloit		III	[3]	STATE:	consin 53511	55	Ħ	
5.	LOCATION OF LEGAL DESC	RIPTION (\$	× 4	arn	6 /				
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'. DESCRIPTION	T .			(Check	(One)		
CONDITION	X Excellent	☐ Good	☐ Fair		iorated	Ruins	Unexposed
CONDITION		(Check Or	1e)			(Che	eck One)
	☐ Alter	ed	X Unaltered	1		☐ Moved	▼ Original Site
DESCRIBE THE PE	RESENT AND ORI	GINAL (if kno	own) PHYSICA	L APPEAR	ANCE		

The First Congregational Church in Beloit is a rectangular structure 100' in length and 70' in width constructed of Milwaukee brick. A steeple with a 20' square tower rises from the entrance facade. The expression of the exterior is a combination of Romanesque Revival and Greek Revival forms. The facades are divided into bays marked by semicircular arches within which large windows are set. The roof has a cornice ornamented with dentils.

There are three main entrances to the church. Two flank the tower and open directly into the auditorium and the stairs to the gallery. The center entrance opens into a vestibule within the tower which then opens into the auditorium. The auditorium is a rectangular space spanned by a plastered barrel vault. A gallery wraps around three sides of the hall. Supporting the gallery are twelve bronzed cast-iron Corinthian columns. Directly above these are identical columns which support the ceiling and a series of ribbed vaults which define each window bay. The windows rise unbroken behind the gallery. The bays are defined further by ribbing which crosses the barrel vault and terminates on either side with a console. The pulpit originally stood in a recess, but it was moved to its present position in the house when the organ was installed in the recess in 1869. Throughout the church's history the walls and ceiling of the auditorium have remained unornamented.

The foundations are of coursed stone rubble. Of the original six chimneys, only one remains. Two twentieth-century, curving balustrades frame the main entrance. The original spire was finished in 1871 and toppled by an 1883 tornado. In 1894 the wooden spire-work above the brick base was added.

ERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
□ Pre-Columbian	16th Century	18th Century	20th Century
☐ 15th Century	☐ 17th Century	🔀 19th Century	
PECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicab	le and Known) 18	59-1862	- M=-
REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Che	eck One or More as Appropr	iate)	
Abor iginal	Education	☐ Political	Urban Planning
☐ Prehistoric	Engineering	Religion/Phi-	Other (Specify)
☐ Historic	Industry	losophy	
☐ Agriculture	Invention	Science	
X Architecture	Landscape	Sculpture	
☐ Art	Architecture	Social/Human-	
☐ Commerce	Literature	itarian	
Communications	Military	☐ Theater	
Conservation	☐ Music	☐ Transportation	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The First Congregational Church of Beloit is significant architecturally as a major work of the important mid-nineteenth-century Wisconsin architect, Lucas Bradley of Racine. Its cornerstone was laid in June, 1859, and it was dedicated in July, 1862.

Lucas Bradley was the first architect in Racine, settling there in 1844. Born in Cayuga County, New York, he first worked for fourteen years as a carpenter-architect in St. Louis. He designed the First Presbyterian Church (NRHP) in Racine, built in 1851-1852, the Greek Revival Kuehneman house (NRHP) in Racine, and the Second Presbyterian Church (demolished) of 1839-1840 in St. Louis. His Wisconsin buildings have proved to be among the most sensitive and accomplished pre-Civil-War designs in the state.

Bradley was a friend of Aaron Lucius Chapin, the first president of Beloit College and a member of the First Congregational Church, which undoubtedly resulted in his selection for this commission as well as his work for the college itself. Bradley was apparently influenced by contemporary Greek Revival pattern books, which can be seen in several of his designs and which explains the evident influence of the revivalism on this church. The original Bradley-designed spire, toppled by a tornado in 1883, was quite similar to Minard Lefever's spire on the now-destroyed Pearl Street Church in Hartford, Connecticut.

The First Congregational Church, therefore, is a significant work of a pioneer Wisconsin architect and is the finest extant nineteenth-century church remaining in the City of Beloit.

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"New Light Has Solved Mystery on the Architecture of Historic First Congregational Church of Beloit," <u>Beloit Daily News</u>, Feb. 1, 1965, and Feb. 2, 1965.

File, Beloit Congregational Church File, Division of Sites and Markers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Room 325.

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