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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service
NATIONAL REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Good Shepherd Church

other name/site number: Good Shepherd Mission

2. Location

street & number: W.Va. Route 61

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Coalburg

vicinity: N/A

state: WV code: 54 county: Kanawha code: 039 zip code: 25035

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Buildings

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

=====
4. State/Federal Agency Certification
=====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. See continuation sheet.

William G. Farnon
Signature of certifying official

3/23/90
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
5. National Park Service Certification
=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Entered in the
National Register

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): _____

Alton Byers

4/26/90

Signature of Keeper

Date of
Action

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic: Religion/Religious Structure

Sub: Church

Current : Religion/Religious Structure

Sub: Church

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification:
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals
Late Gothic Revival

=====

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation stone (limestone) roof asphalt single
walls weatherboard other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: locally.

Applicable National Register Criteria: B

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : A

Areas of Significance: Ethnic Heritage (European)
Religion

Period(s) of Significance: 1880 - 1912

Significant Dates : c. 1877-1884 1912

Significant Person(s): Father Joseph Stenger

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: John Canterbury, Builder
Andy Thompson, Carpenter

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
X See continuation sheet.

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

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 -- Specify Repository: Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston,
Wheeling, WV

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10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property: One

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A 17 460060 4229040 B - _____
C - _____ D - _____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: X See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: X See continuation sheet.

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

Name/Title: Michael J. Pauley, Historian

Organization: State Historic Pres. Office

Date: January 30, 1990

Street & Number: Cultural Center

Telephone: (304) 348-0240

City or Town: Charleston

State: WV ZIP: 25305

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The Good Shepherd Church, or Mission, is situated on a tiny strip of land between the Great Kanawha River to the north and the C & O Railroad line and W.Va. Route 61 to the south, in the small community of Coalburg, in Kanawha County, West Virginia.

The church itself, or mission as it is sometimes referred to, is basically a one-story ell with a steeply pitched front gabled roof. The front elevation of the building is dominated by a squared, slender, steeple, adorned on each side with twin tabernacular-like windows, that tapers to a sharp point at the pinnacle.

The building is five bays long. Each bay contains tabernacular, slender pointed stained glass windows, said to have been imported from Germany in the late 19th century, that are divided into ten lights. The windows have wooden surrounds. Wide overhanging eaves are supported by evenly spaced unadorned brackets. The rear ell, which extends to the east, is entered by a rear door with a small porch roof and the ell appears to slice in half one of the tabernacular windows. The church is on a high raised limestone foundation. There is a single room basement, covering about 1/3 of the area of the church, in which Sunday school classes are held in good weather, that was dug by the local firm of Burke, Golden & Fassy.

The interior of the Good Shepherd Church, with the exception of the one room ell extension, is basically one large room, having a central aisle that runs between long wooden pews. At the rear of the church (or over the front entrance foyer) is a choir loft with solid wooden rail upheld by wooden posts. At the front of the church are two classical-style religious paintings, one of St. Jerome, the other of Christ the Good Shepherd. The artist(s) is unknown. The pulpit stand, of a walnut-type wood, was constructed by Lloyd Spencer of East Bank, a local carpenter. There is a very ornate cast-iron baptismal font near the altar.

Beside the church, to its immediate east, is the ornate Celtic cross described in Part 8 that rests on earth from County Kerry, Ireland, and was placed there in 1912. The cross, which is concrete, is said to have been poured by John Rader, a local stonemason. It is a contributing resource.

The original wood plank floor is in place, though the ceiling has been slightly dropped and from it hang bulbous lamps, not original.

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There is a small noncontributing one-story wooden outbuilding that was and still serves as an outdoor privy. A small gravel parking lot is to the east side of the church. Originally, there was an old Catholic Cemetery approximately one mile to the east that was associated with the church, but it has been cut off by the construction of several intervening buildings.

The Good Shepherd Church, or Mission, the Kanawha Valley's oldest Roman Catholic house of worship, is visible for several miles from both east and west, making it one of the area's most prominent landmarks.

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The Good Shepherd Catholic Church, standing on the south side of the banks of the Kanawha River at Coalburg, Kanawha County, is significant as the oldest Catholic church in the Kanawha Valley and for its association with the large influx of Irish and Italian miners during its early period.¹ It is also significant for its association with Father Joseph Stenger, a giant in the early life of the Catholic community.²

Explanatory Notes

1. The coal and gas boom experienced in the upper (or eastern) end of the Kanawha Valley immediately following the end of the Civil War in 1865, brought about a large influx of immigrants to that area, primarily of Irish and Italian extraction. This labor movement is well documented elsewhere. When these immigrants, who were nearly all Roman Catholic, arrived in the Kanawha Valley, they found the area dominated by Baptist and Methodist Churches, as well as a few other denominations, but no Catholic houses of worship. Father Joseph Stenger, who had been appointed Catholic circuit rider for the area in 1862, was the guiding force behind the church. The founding of the Good Shepherd Church proceeded at such a rate that, by 1877, church records were referring to the "Good Shepherd Church", although the first actual written documentation of the building did not take place until 1884. The church immediately became a religious and social center for the eastern Kanawha Valley. Contributions poured in, from rich and poor alike.

There are church records stating that in 1878 "Sunday School was being taught at Coalburg" and there were 66 baptisms in the vicinity the same year. An 1881 report talks of a "new church fund" and an 1883 report to the diocese mentions a small amount of "insurance money from a fire". It could be that a church was constructed in 1877-78, burned in 1881 or 82, and was re-built in 1883. Therefore, a circa 1880 date is given for the building.

The Church of the Good Shepherd at Coalburg served the Roman Catholic community of immigrant miners, gas, oil men, and railroad men for over a century, still being the most prominent edifice on the south side of the Kanawha River for many miles in either direction.

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2. The church's ties with the prominent pioneering Catholic circuit rider Fr. Joseph Stenger are strong. He came to the Coalburg area in 1862 and helped to found Sunday schools, perform sacred offices, baptisms, marriages, etc. throughout the region from that time until, twenty years later, he saw the building of the Church of the Good Shepherd come to fruition. His circuit also included much of central West Virginia, including Summersville and Camp Piatt. Father Stenger retired October 3, 1886, after 24 years of service to the Kanawha Valley.

Several events of historic interest have taken place here. U.S. Senator John E. Kenna, one of our state's two representatives in Statuary Hall in Washington, was a parishioner at Good Shepherd. He died in office in 1893 and High Mass was held for his soul at Good Shepherd. In 1921, during the famous labor upheavals, the church was used as a meeting hall for unions organizers and was raided by "company thugs" seeking weapons.

One of the most unusual physical aspects of the Good Shepherd Mission is the concrete Celtic Cross that stands next to the church. It provides a direct link to noted author, statesman, and businessman William Seymour Edwards, son of the great naturalist. In 1911 Edwards and his wife, friends but not members of the parish, traveled to Europe and brought back with them, in 1912, a piece of earth taken in front of the cabin of St. Patrick in Ireland. Let the inscription on the base of the cross (also paid for by Edwards) speak for itself:

"Presented March 17, 1912 to
The Sons and Daughters of Ireland
In Kanawha County
To Commemorate the Consecration of
The Shamrock Sod
Brought From
Saint Patrick's Cottage
In the Gap of Dunlo, Killarny
County Kerry, Ireland
By Mr. & Mrs. William Seymour Edwards"

W.S. Edwards also made other, frequent and needed contributions to the Good Shepherd Mission. It should also be noted that a duplicate of this Celtic Cross marks the Edwards' burial plot in Charleston's Springhill Cemetery.

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Period of Significance

The period of significance is 1880 to 1912. This covers the period from ca. 1880, approximately when the religious edifice was constructed and takes in the period of greatest growth when Roman Catholic immigrants were arriving in the Upper Kanawha Valley in their greatest numbers, and goes up to and includes the several highly significant historic events occurring here; the high mass held for U.S. Senator John E. Kenna and the 1912 erection of the Celtic Cross by W.V. House Speaker William Seymour Edwards.

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Brennen, Margaret, "Letter from Diocesan Archives, Wheeling, W.Va.,"
September 2, 1982.

Harding, James E., Good Shepherd Church, W.V. Historic Properties
Inventory Form, January 17, 1978.

"Oral Interview with Mrs. Patty Nugent", by Michael Pauley, Coalburg,
W.Va., January 23, 1990.

Toner, Robin, "Celtic Cross, Sod, Mark Irish Pride", Charleston Daily
Mail, March 17, 1980.

Wriston, Jerry, The Coalburg Catholic Church, East Bank, WV, East Bank
High School, April 22, 1983.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point on the north right-of-way of the C & O Railroad track/right-of-way where said right-of-way meets Church Drive; thence in a straight 200 feet line due north to the south side of the Great Kanawha River; thence along the southern bank of the Great Kanawha River for 200 feet due west; thence in a line 200 feet due south to the north right-of-way of the C & O Railroad line; thence in a line 200 feet due east to the point of beginning.

Verbal Boundary Justification

This area encompasses approximately one acre which, historically has been associated with the Good Shepherd Church (which sits in the center of said plot of ground) and includes not only the church itself but its immediate access and parking area.