

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received **JUL 21** 1983  
date entered

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

## 1. Name

historic First Congregational Church

and/or common Same

## 2. Location

street & number 303 S. Dakota Ave. NA not for publication

city, town Sioux Falls NA vicinity of

state South Dakota code 046 county Minnehaha code 099

## 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name The First Congregational Church of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Inc.

street & number 303 S. Dakota Avenue

city, town Sioux Falls NA vicinity of state SD

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Minnehaha County Register of Deeds

street & number 415 N. Dakota Avenue

city, town Sioux Falls state SD

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Sites Survey of Sioux Falls has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1982  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Historical Preservation Center

city, town Vermillion state SD

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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered slightly**Check one** original site moved

date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Sited on a rise on the west side of the downtown commercial district of Sioux Falls, the First Congregational Church is one of the Sioux quartzite landmarks of the city. The church is rectangular in shape with cross gable roof, and the transept located almost exactly in the center of the building. Two towers of unequal height are located in the corners of the front facade, while a third tower like structure on the north side facade contains the rear entrance. The church is 2 1/2 stories in height and has an appended two-story educational wing, built in 1955, on the south side facade. This wing merely abuts the building and is located on the least public facade. Rusticated stone, an overall squat appearance and semi-circular arches form the buildings Richardsonian Romanesque features.

On the interior the narthex leads into a large auditorium-like nave. The transept is not demarcated on the interior and a raised chancel contains the pulpit, choir, altar and pipe organ. While the narthex and balcony have the original stained glass windows, the large, three-part side windows have c. 1960s stained glass work. The rear section of the church behind the auditorium is devoted to three stories of office and classroom space.

The west entry was remodeled in 1981.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input 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 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		

<b>Specific dates</b>	1879, 1907	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Joseph Schwarz, architect Sioux Falls, SD Thomas W. Ross, contractor Sioux Falls, SD Remodeling: Lucas, Craig & Whitwam architects, Sioux Falls, SD Sioux Falls Construction Co.
<b>Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)</b>	<p>Designed in 1907 by Joseph Schwarz, the First Congregational Church is among the finest Richardsonian Romanesque buildings in the state. Significant in the areas of architecture and religion, the congregation is the third oldest congregation in the city.</p> <p>The Methodists were the first church body to organize in the city of Sioux Falls in 1871. The next congregations to organize were the Episcopalians and Congregationalists a year later. The Reverend Ray Palmer had been sent by the American Home Missionary Society to the Dakota Territory to found a congregation. During the first seven years worshippers met in a barracks building, but in 1879 they erected their first church. This modest, brown, frame structure was referred to as "God's Barn."</p> <p>In 1907 the church chose locally prominent architect, Joseph Schwarz to design a new building. Schwarz had designed several fine structures in quartzite, including the city library (listed on the NR). Although the building used the Romanesque motifs in a skillful; the auditorium style plan resulted in a somewhat boxy shape. In addition, Schwarz was not entirely successful in handling the large expanse of wall in the building and hence the building has a somewhat ungainly appearance. Nonetheless, it is a visual landmark in the city, sited, as it is, across from the quartzite Washington High School. The building has been well maintained and the integrity of the original architecture respected when alterations have been made.</p>		

\*manner

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Charles A. Smith, A Comprehensive History of Minnehaha County, South Dakota, Educator Supply Co.: Mitchell, SD, 1949: 255-271.  
Dana R. Bailey, History of Minnehaha County, South Dakota, Brown & Saenger: Sioux Falls, SD, 1899: 340-343.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property one

Quadrangle name Sioux Falls East

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

### UTM References

A 

114	681331910	41821351610
Zone	Easting	Northing

B 

Zone	Easting	Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The lot lines of the property form the boundary of the site which is located in Lots 14-18 and Lots 1-4 and the north 6 feet of Lot 5, Block 6, J.L. Phillips addition to the city of Sioux Falls.

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

state	NA	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Fern Chamberlain technical editing: Carolyn Torma (605-677-5314)

organization First Congregational Church date 2 May 83

street & number 303 S. Dakota telephone 605-336-3072

city or town Sioux Falls state SD

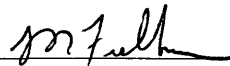
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Director, Office of Cultural Preservation

date 7/12/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 8/18/83

  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Continuation sheet

Item number 9

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Jessica Sherman, "Fortieth Anniversary Address," Collected Papers of  
Edwin A. Sherman, St. Paul, MN, 1946, Vol. 2.

Edward C. Ehrensperger, ed., History of the United Church of Christ  
in South Dakota, Pine Hill Press: Freeman, SD, c. 1977: 108-109.