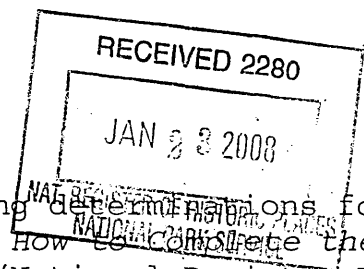


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

159



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

=====
1. Name of Property
=====
historic name Old Christ Church

other names/site number Vermont Historic Sites & Structures Survey #1404-1

=====
2. Location
=====
street & number Vermont Route 12, head of Gilead Brook Road
not for publication n/a
city or town Bethel vicinity n/a state Vermont code VT
county Windsor code 027 zip code 05032

=====
3. State/Federal Agency Certification
=====
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally X statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Suzanne C. Daniels National Register Specialist 1-22-08
Signature of certifying official Date

Vermont State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
4. National Park Service Certification
=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- 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

Edson H. Beall 3.6.08

___ other (explain): _____

for
Signature of Keeper Date
of Action

=====
5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<u>2</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Religious Buildings, Sites and Structures in Vermont

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

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION Sub: religious facility
FUNERARY cemetery

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION Sub: religious facility
FUNERARY cemetery

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Federal

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation stone
Roof slate
Walls weatherboard

Other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type,

period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Religion
Architecture

Period of Significance 1823-1957

Significant Dates 1823
1846

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation n/a

Architect/Builder Warren, Colonel David

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- 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

Name of repository: Christ Church Parish House, Bethel Village

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreage of Property ±2.5 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>18</u>	<u>689016E</u>	<u>4860461N</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

_____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Devin Colman/Owner

organization Colman Consulting date November 1, 2007

street & number 68 Ethan Allen Parkway telephone 802-264-9808

city or town Burlington state VT zip code 05408

=====
Additional Documentation
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Christ Church

street & number North Main Street telephone 802-234-5680

city or town Bethel state VT zip code 05032
=====

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to range from approximately 18 hours to 36 hours depending on several factors including, but not limited to, how much documentation may already exist on the type of property being nominated and whether the property is being nominated as

part of a Multiple Property Documentation Form. In most cases, it is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form to meet minimum National Register documentation requirements. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

=====
Narrative Description

Old Christ Church is an outstanding example of a high Federal style church building in which both the interior and exterior remain nearly unaltered from the time of its construction in 1823. Located behind Old Christ Church is a small cemetery containing approximately eighty gravesites, the earliest of which dates to 1822. The cemetery continues to accept new burials, and at the present time Old Christ Church is used for religious services only during the summer months as it has no electricity, running water or heat. The surrounding landscape consists of wooded hills, open pastures, and meandering streams and shows very few signs of modern development. The church and cemetery are located on the east side of VT Route 12, approximately four miles north of Bethel Village at the head of Gilead Brook Road. The Town of Bethel is located in east-central Vermont, between the towns of Randolph and Royalton. Old Christ Church and Old Christ Church Cemetery retain their integrity of location, materials, workmanship, feeling, association, setting and design.

Description of resources

Architectural descriptions are based on field research conducted by Devin Colman on June 29, 2007, and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation/Historic Sites and Structures Survey for Old Christ Church, Survey #1404-1.

Old Christ Church, 1823

Old Christ Church is an excellent example of high Federal style religious architecture. The perfectly proportioned symmetry of the design and the original materials remain unaltered, and the structure has no electricity, running water or heat. As such, the experience of attending services in the building is the same today as it was in 1824, when the church was consecrated. The building displays the typical configuration of an early

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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nineteenth century New England church, with paired entry doors and an east-west orientation in which one enters on the west elevation and proceeds eastward towards the chancel at the east end of the building. The design of the church features the delicate, understated ornamentation for which the Federal style is known. The gable-front, wood clapboard structure sits on a stone foundation and has a slate roof applied over the original wood shingles. Narrow corner boards and a wide frieze band frame the structure. The structure measures thirty-four and one-half (34'6") feet wide by forty-six and one-half (46'6") long and cost \$1,890.00.¹

The front (west) elevation of the building features two identical entrances that are slightly elevated off the ground and reached by two steps made of massive granite slabs. Each entry has a single, six-panel door and full entablature supported by tapered Doric pilasters. The projecting molded cornice is separated from the frieze by a narrow trim band perforated with a repeating pattern of small circles above downward-pointing triangles. Centered above each door and completely filling the space between the top of the door entablature and the bottom of the frieze band are identical 12/12 windows. Each window features a projecting molded cornice and wide frieze. The full pediment has boxed eaves and a raking and horizontal saw tooth dentilated cornice. The pediment frames a centrally placed elliptical fanlight with a rounded, projecting molded cornice. There is a small keystone at the top of the fanlight cornice, and five thin muntins radiate outward from a semi-circular point centered on the bottom edge of the window.

The side (north and south) elevations of the building are identical to each other and feature five, equally spaced, full-height, 25/25 windows. As on the front elevation, each window features a projecting molded cornice and wide frieze. The molded boxed eaves extend beyond the frieze band and are supported by narrow corner boards.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 3

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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The rear (east) elevation is the simplest side of the building. The full pediment of the front elevation is replaced with very modest cornice returns, and close eaves replace the molded boxed eaves on the rest of the building. There is no frieze band, and the two full-height, 25/25 windows have simple, unadorned casings. Centered between and elevated above these two windows is a round-arch window. Its twenty-five light lower sash is in line with the upper sash of the two flanking windows, while its rounded upper sash rises up with delicate muntins that curve into pointed arches.

A stacked, open tower centered on the ridgeline sits above the west elevation of the church. The first tier of the tower is clad with wood clapboards and framed by a narrow corner boards and a wide frieze. The molded entablature features a dentilated cornice with decorative scrolls. The tower has a pyramidal hipped roof covered with standing-seam sheet metal. The decorative wood balustrade is divided into three equal sections on each face of the tower. Solid wood panels with applied half-round molding in the shape of a rectangle fill the outermost sections. The center sections contain cut-out interlocking rings with a large five-pointed star filing the center ring. The center ring is flanked by two smaller rings, which are in turn flanked by large semi-circular rings. The balustrade is supported at each corner by unadorned, square posts with flat wooden caps. The second tier of the tower is supported by four square columns set inside the balustrade of the first tier. Three stacked layers of progressively larger wooden squares cap each column and support four elliptical arches, one on each side of the tower. Above each arch is another molded entablature featuring a dentilated cornice with decorative scrolls. The second tier also has a pyramidal hipped roof covered with standing-seam sheet metal. Each side of the uppermost balustrade is divided into two equal sections by a vertical wooden member, which is flanked by a wooden X on each side. The balustrade is supported at each corner by unadorned, square posts with flat wooden caps.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 4

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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The church is entered through one of two doors on the west elevation leading into a small lobby. A wooden box on the south wall of the lobby holds the original seating chart from the time of the church's construction.² The west wall of the lobby contains a second set of doors, slightly offset from the alignment of the two exterior entry doors, leading into the auditorium. At the south end of the lobby a staircase leads to a choir gallery with additional rows of seating. The west wall of the lobby supports the front edge of the gallery above, and two evenly spaced, tapered, square Doric columns at the front edge of the gallery support the ceiling and tower above. The column capitals feature delicate rope molding. The gallery floor steps upward towards the rear of the church to ensure visibility of the pulpit at the east end of the church. Centered in the ceiling at the rear of the gallery is a small removable panel, accessed by a wooden ladder, leading to the interior of the attic. From the attic a second wooden ladder leads upward through the interior of the tower to a second removable panel, which leads outside to the first tier of the tower.

The unpainted lobby doors each lead to an aisle that extends the length of the auditorium. On both sides of each aisle are boxed-in pews with half-height walls accessed by outward swinging, hinged doors. The two outermost rows of pews fill the space between the exterior wall and the adjacent aisle. The center row of pews is twice as wide as the two outermost rows, and is divided in half lengthwise by a shared half-height wooden wall. These pews all face east, towards the chancel and altar. At the eastern end of the auditorium, in the north and south corners, are two additional boxed-in pews facing the north and south sides of the chancel, respectively. All of the boxed-in pews are painted white on the exterior and are unpainted on the interior. Each pew features a built-in wooden bench with a straight back and an angled shelf at the front to hold Bibles and hymnals.

At the time of its construction, Old Christ Church most likely had a raised pulpit at the east end of the auditorium in front

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 5

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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of which was a communion table or altar. In an effort to "update" the church in the 1880s, the raised pulpit may have been removed and replaced with the existing semi-circular chancel area, built one step above the floor and enclosed by a curved communion rail with a central opening. Marks on the wainscoting and the floor indicate that the original communion rail had a square profile, whereas the existing rail is rounded.³ Today an altar built in the 1970s by local craftsman Ken Bostrum occupies the center of the chancel and is the focus of the congregation (as opposed to the original raised pulpit). The wall behind the altar features the interior side of the previously described round-arch window on the east elevation. It is framed by fluted Doric pilasters, the capitals of which feature the same rope molding found on the gallery columns. The top of the window is framed by a wide, round-arch molding with an alternating pattern of carved flowers separated by three incised lines. A keystone at the top of the round-arch molding has a single carved flower in its center. Mounted on the wall on either side of the arch-top window are two tablets inscribed with the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed (on the left panel) and the Ten Commandments (on the right panel). The text is printed on paper and the tall, narrow panels have Gothic-style frames. These two panels may have been "recycled" to Old Christ Church from the Bethel Village Church in the 1880s. The Village Church (built 1846-47) is Gothic in style and was remodeled in the 1880s, perhaps resulting in the removal of these two panels and their subsequent installation in Old Christ Church.⁴ The panels are painted a drab color, typical of the 1880s, and unlike any other painted surfaces in Old Christ Church. One local historian states that the panels came from Salem, Massachusetts, but does not provide any specific details.⁵

The building itself, including the tower, is a timber frame structure secured by wooden pegs. The plaster walls are supported by split-board lath, the pattern of which is visible on the interior wall surface and from the attic. The floor of the church is unpainted wood, and the walls, ceiling, and window

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 6

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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casings are painted white. On the interior, each window has flat casings edged with molded trim.

Old Christ Church Cemetery, 1822

Old Christ Church Cemetery is located on a gently sloping hill behind the church. The oldest gravestone dates to 1822, and the cemetery continues to be used for new burials today. It contains approximately eighty gravesites, placed in roughly defined rows and interspersed with trees. The majority of the gravestones have flat or arched tops, although there are a few taller stone obelisks and several stones carved into the shape of the cross.

Among those buried in Old Christ Church Cemetery are Asa Smith, the first child born in Bethel, and many members of the founding families of Bethel.

End of property descriptions.

¹ Howard S. Greenlee, *Old Christ Church: A Special Place* (1994), 3.

² Leyland E. Wood, *Two Vermont Hollows: A History of Gilead and Little Hollows* (Randolph, VT: L. E. Wood, 1976), 108.

³ Howard S. Greenlee, *Old Christ Church: A Special Place* (1994), 5.

⁴ Howard S. Greenlee, *Old Christ Church: A Special Place* (1994), 4.

⁵ Leyland E. Wood, *Two Vermont Hollows: A History of Gilead and Little Hollows* (Randolph, VT: L. E. Wood, 1976), 108.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 1

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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Statement of Significance

Old Christ Church is a Protestant Episcopal religious structure built in the Federal style. Begun in 1823 and completed in 1824, Old Christ Church is closely intertwined with the history of the Town of Bethel and played an important role in the town's early development. Colonel David Warren of Rochester, Vermont, was the chief builder of Old Christ Church, with local resident Simeon Chase spearheading its construction. Located behind the church is a small cemetery containing approximately eighty gravesites, including many of the town's early residents. Old Christ Church and Old Christ Church Cemetery meet National Register Criteria A and C. The period of significance for Old Christ Church is 1823-1957. The structure is also being listed under the Multiple Property Description Form "Religious Buildings, Sites and Structures in Vermont" and meets the registration requirements for churches.

Bethel, Vermont, has the distinction of being the first town chartered by the independent republic of Vermont on December 23, 1779. Two years earlier, on December 29, 1777, an association was formed in Hanover, New Hampshire, to create a settlement called "Bethel" in Vermont's White River Valley.¹ After petitioning the Vermont legislature, the association was awarded a land grant on March 18, 1778. The formal township charter for a thirty-six (36) square mile parcel of land was executed on December 23, 1779, and issued to the forty-six association members.²

Many of the early settlers in the White River Valley came from Cornish, New Hampshire, including several members of the Chase family. Deacon Dudley Chase and his wife, Allace Corbett, had fifteen children (one of whom died in infancy), and in the late 1770s Deacon Chase began to think about how best to provide for his large family. Already a successful farmer and businessman in Cornish, Chase decided to invest in land in the Bethel area. He was one of the original association members, and visited the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 2

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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White River Valley in the mid-1770s. Tales of Chase's exploration of the region vary; in one account, he set out alone and on foot to explore the White River Valley.³ In another account, several association members accompanied Chase with the purpose of surveying the new township.⁴ The following tale is retold in several written histories of Bethel, although some writers question its factual basis. Nonetheless, it bears repeating given its connection to the history of the town and Old Christ Church:

Late at night, weary and hungry, [Deacon Chase] made his camp at a point near the site of old Christ Church, in what is now called Bethel, Vermont. Here he found a convenient stone for a pillow, and doubtless made himself as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. He soon fell asleep and, like Jacob of old, dreamed that he saw the "Angels of God ascending and descending a ladder let down from Heaven," and this he considered a token that he had found the land of promise.⁵

Deacon Chase's dream recalled the biblical story of Jacob in Genesis XXVIII: 11-22, in which Jacob slept in a field using a stone for a pillow. In the morning, Jacob declared: "...this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house," and he named the site Bethel (Hebrew for "House of God"). After Deacon Chase recounted his dream to the other association members, they agreed that their new township should be named Bethel. The area where Deacon Chase spent the night became known locally as Gilead, named for the biblical Mount Gilead, and today Gilead Brook still bears the name.⁶ The site where Deacon Chase spent the night would later become the land upon which Old Christ Church was built.

On July 27, 1794, a Protestant Episcopal congregation consisting of residents of Bethel, Randolph and Rochester formed to establish Christ Church. The new parish was presided over and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

certified by Reverend John C. Ogden. Reverend Ogden, along with Reverend Bethuel Chittenden (brother of Thomas Chittenden, first governor of Vermont), is considered one of the great pioneers of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Vermont. Christ Church Bethel was among the first Protestant Episcopal parishes established in Vermont; other early parishes included Manchester, Arlington, Sandgate, Castleton, Tinmouth, Wells, Fairfield, Weathersfield and Rockingham.⁷ As was typically the case in rural Vermont communities, the young parish did not have a dedicated facility and held services throughout the town in log cabins, barns and schoolhouses. One of the schoolhouses, built circa 1803 in Gilead, stood on the future site of Old Christ Church.⁸ This practice continued for two decades, with a succession of different ministers performing services. Over the years the small congregation lost its motivation, and it was not until 1820 that, in the words of church historian Daniel Child, "the Church began to arose herself from her death-sleep."⁹ On Easter Sunday, April 21, 1821, Christ Church Bethel was reorganized and renamed "The Protestant Episcopal Church & Society in Bethel." Shortly thereafter the decision was made to construct a permanent church structure in Bethel, and on December 3, 1822, a church meeting was held at the home of Simeon Chase (son of Deacon Chase). At this meeting a building committee consisting of Simeon Chase, Jr., Salmon C. Cotton, Ezra Putnam and Daniel Child was given ten days to prepare a plan for the construction of the new church. On December 13, 1822, their plan was presented and accepted by the congregation.¹⁰ According to church records:

Wednesday, February 26, 1823. The members of the Episcopal Society met according to [illegible].

1st: Voted to accept the report of the Building Committee which estimates that a House 32 feet wide and 26 feet long plainly finished with a gallery for singers (a plan of which is presented) will cost about \$1200.¹¹

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 4

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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Simeon Chase owned the land upon which the 1803 Gilead schoolhouse stood, the same site where his father, Deacon Chase, had spent the night forty-three years earlier and had his dream. Because the site had sufficient space upon which to build a new church and burial ground, Simeon Chase sold the property to the Church for fifty dollars.¹² The schoolhouse was removed to a new site on the west side of the road, the expense of which was included in the original construction estimate of twelve hundred dollars.¹³ One year later, Chase sold an adjacent parcel of land on the north side of the property to the church for eight dollars. Measuring just eight feet wide by eighty feet long, this small parcel contained horse sheds used by churchgoers to stable their horses during services.¹⁴ These sheds are no longer standing.

Construction of the new church began in the summer of 1823 under the direction of master builder Colonel David Warren of Rochester, Vermont.¹⁵ The foundation of the building, it is said, was built using stones gathered from the immediate vicinity to fulfill the prophecy of Deacon Chase's dream.¹⁶ Much of the lumber used in its construction may have come from the sawmills owned by two members of the parish, Simeon Chase and Enos Child, whose mills were located south of Old Christ Church at the foot of the hill on Gilead Brook.¹⁷ Construction proceeded rapidly, but was temporarily delayed in late 1823 due to sickness among Warren's workers. Construction resumed and the building was completed in the spring of 1824 at the cost of \$1,890.00.¹⁸ Two members, Asa Smith and Bibye Lake Cotton, each donated \$100.00 to the building fund, a sizable contribution in 1823. The new church was consecrated as "Christ Church, Bethel" on June 23, 1824, by Bishop Alexander Viets Griswold (1776-1843).¹⁹ It should be noted that while the original plan for the church specified a structure thirty-two feet wide by twenty-six feet long, the actual building measures thirty-four and one-half feet wide by forty-six and one-half feet long. The larger dimensions may explain why its construction cost \$1,890.00 instead of the original estimate of \$1,200.00.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 5

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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Architecturally, Old Christ Church is an excellent example of the high Federal style. Known for its light and delicate detailing derived from the classical architecture of ancient Rome, the Federal style was the first major architectural style in Vermont and used widely from the late 1700s through the 1830s. Early settlers and skilled master builders originally from southern New England and New York brought the Federal style to Vermont. They and, later, locally trained builders both copied and were influenced by carpenters' handbooks that included building designs, floor plans and suggestions for ornamentation. Among the most popular books were *The Country Builder's Assistant*, published in 1797, and the 1806 *American Builder's Companion*, both written by Asher Benjamin, a noted Massachusetts master builder.²⁰ Examples at Old Christ Church of the Federal style as presented in Benjamin's plan books include the six-panel doors with flat panels organized with two small square panels above four larger rectangular panels. Moldings are generally left free of enrichment, with the exception of incised lines, as seen on the interior moldings surrounding the round-arch window. Benjamin recommended decorating flat surfaces with drilled holes or with applied pieces of cut molding, as seen on the front elevation of Old Christ Church. He also introduced narrow window sash muntins, often less than five-eighths of an inch wide.²¹ The extraordinarily thin muntins in Old Christ Church's 25/25 windows add to the building's overall effect of lightness and delicacy.

At some point in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century the second tier of the tower was removed. Photographic postcards from 1904-1918 show the tower with only one tier, as does a photograph in a 1947 newspaper article about the church. These images show the balustrade on the west side with the interlocking circle motif, but no star in the center circle. The center panels on the other three balustrades are open. An 1865 painting of the church, however, clearly shows two tiers on the tower, in a similar configuration as what exists today.²² The second tier was reconstructed to its present configuration prior

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 6

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

to 1973, when another photograph in a newspaper article shows two tiers. Unfortunately, despite researching church records and minutes of vestry meetings, no documentation could be located to explain when or why the second tier of the tower was removed and rebuilt. It does seem unusual that a small congregation of limited financial means would invest money in repairing or rebuilding the top tier of a tower on a building used only once or twice a year.



Early 20th century postcard image of Old Christ Church showing the tower with only one tier. Image courtesy Nick Nikolaidis, Bethel, Vermont.

The site of Old Christ Church was selected in part for its proximity to nearby towns and villages: the Gilead Brook location allowed the church to serve parishioners throughout Bethel and the nearby communities of Randolph and Rochester. As these small towns became more established and independent, however, there was less need for regional churches and a desire for more urban locations closer to centers of population.²³ In

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 7

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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1835 Grace Church in Randolph Center was organized, followed a year later by St. Paul's Church in Royalton. According to Child: "The separation of these two churches from the mother stock materially diminished her strength and ability."²⁴ At the same time, Bethel Village was growing and prospering a few miles south of Old Christ Church at a site where abundant water power was available to operate grist and saw mills. By 1883, Bethel Village had a population of approximately five hundred fifty (550) and contained "...three churches (Episcopal, Congregational and Universalist), a bank, two hotels, a graded school, an extensive flour and feed mill, a tannery, carriage shop, harness shop, marble and granite shop, two livery stables, and about a dozen stores of various kinds."²⁵

As Bethel Village grew, the rural population surrounding Old Christ Church began to dwindle. To better serve the congregation, the parish decided in 1845 to construct a new Christ Church in Bethel Village. It was built in 1846 and consecrated in 1847 as "Christ Church, Bethel." It is at this point that the original Christ Church, no longer in use, became known as "Old Christ Church." Several attempts were made to sell the vacant building, and consideration was given to moving the structure to Randolph. Finally, in 1852, the building (but not the burial ground) was sold to the Methodist Episcopal Society of Gilead for \$200.00.²⁶ The Methodists used the building for their worship services for the next twenty years.

In 1871, Christ Church regained possession of the Old Christ Church building from the Methodists and continues to use it today. Because the building has never been modernized with electricity, heat or running water, Old Christ Church is used only during the summer months, and during the rest of year services are held in Christ Church in Bethel Village. The unaltered, original condition of the building and its connection to the founding of Bethel and its earliest inhabitants make Old Christ Church an essential part of the region's history.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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Deacon Dudley Chase (1730-1814)

Dudley Chase, son of Samuel Chase and Mary Dudley, was born in Sutton, Massachusetts. He and his wife, Allace (or Alice) Corbett, married in 1753 and started a family that would eventually grow to include fifteen children (one of whom died in infancy). Around 1765 Dudley, Allace and seven children moved from Sutton, Massachusetts, to Cornish, New Hampshire. They were among the earliest settlers in the region and helped establish the Town of Cornish.²⁷ Dudley Chase worked as a farmer and had large land holdings in the Cornish area. For most of his life Deacon Chase was a Congregationalist, and a deacon in the local church, but in 1793 he converted to the Protestant Episcopal faith at the urging of his son, Philander. This conversion, along with his purchase of land in Bethel, laid the groundwork for the future construction of Old Christ Church. Chase was instrumental in forming Trinity Church in Cornish in 1793, under the direction of Reverend John C. Ogden. One year later, in 1794, he and Reverend Ogden oversaw the formation of Christ Church, Bethel.²⁸ Although Dudley Chase continued to live in Cornish, he came to Bethel frequently to visit his many relatives who had settled there.

Bishop Philander Chase (1775-1852)

Philander Chase was the youngest child of Dudley and Allace Chase. He was born in Cornish, New Hampshire, and until the age of fifteen planned to follow in his father's footsteps as a farmer. Dudley Chase, however, had other plans for his youngest son and encouraged him to pursue religious studies. While visiting a sister in Bethel, Philander cut his foot severely with an axe. It took a year for his foot to heal, and shortly thereafter Philander broke his leg while preparing a field for wheat. These two accidents persuaded Philander to enter college and abandon his hopes of becoming a farmer. He enrolled at Dartmouth College in 1791, and in 1793 Philander was introduced to *Common Prayer-Book of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America*. He abandoned his Congregational upbringing and began to seek ordination as an Episcopal priest.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 9

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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So strong were his convictions that he persuaded his father, Deacon Dudley Chase, and several other family members to convert to the Protestant Episcopal faith.²⁹ One description of Bishop Chase states that:

He was the pioneer bishop of the West, and by his varied and energetic and untiring efforts did more than any other man of the period to redeem the neglect by the church of the horde of emigrants pouring into the Western country. He was a genuine Yankee, with the characteristic traits of his Puritan stock. Frugally reared on a Vermont farm, yet contriving, as only a New England farmer's boy could, to go to college, he graduated Dartmouth in 1795.³⁰

Philander Chase quickly rose to prominence in the Protestant Episcopal Church, being ordained as a deacon in 1798, ordained as a priest in 1799, and elected first Episcopal Bishop of Ohio in 1818. He served as President of Cincinnati College in 1822, and in 1824 he established Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. He was elected first Bishop of Illinois in 1835, and established Jubilee College in Brimfield, Illinois, in 1839.³¹ Throughout all of his travels and ministerial work, Philander consistently returned to Bethel and Cornish to visit his family and support the local Protestant Episcopal parishes. While it is doubtful that Philander had direct involvement in the construction of Old Christ Church, he most likely supported and encouraged the effort.

David Warren (b. 1791)

Very little biographical information exists for David Warren, who is referred to both as a Colonel and a Captain in various texts. It is believed that he was born in 1791 in Hardwick, Massachusetts, and married to Adeline Gilbert (b. 1806) of Brandon, Vermont.³² Early references to him state that he worked as a carpenter in Brandon and was also known to be "a cabinet maker of high repute."³³ In 1810 Warren drew up plans for a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 10

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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Congregational Meetinghouse in Rochester and, in 1814, he and Nathaniel Wing built horse sheds for the same building.³⁴ Unfortunately, this church burned down in 1944.³⁵ Warren's known projects include an 1822 remodel of the Brandon House (known today as the Brandon Inn). The original building, however, was almost completely destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 1880, and it is not known if any of Warren's work remains intact. He and Nyrarn Clark built the Brandon Meeting House in 1832.³⁶ In the 1850s he worked for the Brandon-based M.J. Gilbert & Co., later known as the Brandon Car Company, designing railroad car bodies. One historic account of Brandon states that: "The designer of these [rail] cars was David Warren, to whom we are indebted for the lasting beauty of many of our homes and public buildings."³⁷

End of Narrative Description

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- ¹ Fred G. Cox, *The Illustrated Historical Souvenir of Bethel, Vermont* (Bethel, VT: 1895), 1.
² Hamilton Child, *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Windsor County, VT., for 1883-84* (Syracuse, NY: Hamilton Child, 1884), 88-95.
³ Laura Chase Smith, *The Life of Philander Chase* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1903), 23.
⁴ Hamilton Child, *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Windsor County, VT., for 1883-84* (Syracuse, NY: Hamilton Child, 1884), 91.
⁵ Laura Chase Smith, *The Life of Philander Chase* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1903), 23.
⁶ Esther Munroe Smith, *Vermont Place-Names: Footprints of History* (Rockport, ME: Picton Press, 1977), 524-525.
⁷ Zadock Thompson, *History of Vermont, Natural, Civil, and Statistical* (Burlington, VT: Chauncey Goodrich, 1842), 194.
⁸ Daniel Child, *Old Christ Church, Bethel, Vermont*, (1853), 6-7.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 11

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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- ⁹ Daniel Child, *Old Christ Church, Bethel, Vermont*, (1853), 8.
¹⁰ Daniel Child, *Old Christ Church, Bethel, Vermont*, (1853), 9.
¹¹ *Christ Church Record Book No. 1*, 7.
¹² Bethel Town Clerks Office, Land Records, Book 5/Page 237.
¹³ *Christ Church Record Book No. 1*, 14.
¹⁴ Bethel Town Clerks Office, Land Records, Book 5/Page 229.
¹⁵ *Christ Church Parish Register*, 7.
¹⁶ Hamilton Child, *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Windsor County, VT., for 1883-84* (Syracuse, NY: Hamilton Child, 1884), 88-95.
¹⁷ Leyland E. Wood, *Two Vermont Hollows: A History of Gilead and Little Hollows* (Randolph, VT: L. E. Wood, 1976), 110.
¹⁸ Howard S. Greenlee, *Old Christ Church: A Special Place* (1994), 2.
¹⁹ Daniel Child, *Old Christ Church, Bethel, Vermont*, (1853), 9.
²⁰ Elsa Gilbertson, *The Historic Architecture of Vermont: Guide to Vermont Architecture*, ed. by Curtis B. Johnson, (Montpelier, VT: Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, 1992), 6.
²¹ James L. Garvin, *A Building History of Northern New England* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2001), 108-109.
²² Nicola Smith, "Bethel's Old Christ Church Turns 200," *Valley News*, June 25, 1994, sec. C.
²³ Howard S. Greenlee, *Old Christ Church: A Special Place* (1994), 8.
²⁴ Daniel Child, *Old Christ Church, Bethel, Vermont*, (1853), 11.
²⁵ Hamilton Child, *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Windsor County, VT., for 1883-84* (Syracuse, NY: Hamilton Child, 1884), 88-95.
²⁶ Bethel Town Clerks Office, Land Records, Book 12/Page 278.
²⁷ Calvin R. Batchelder, *A History of the Eastern Diocese/Volume I* (Claremont, NH: The Claremont Manufacturing Company, 1876), 248.
²⁸ Daniel Child, *Old Christ Church, Bethel, Vermont*, (1853), 6.
²⁹ Philander Chase, *Bishop Chase's Reminiscences: An Autobiography* (Boston: James B. Dow, 1848), 15-17.
³⁰ Charles C. Tiffany, *A History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America* (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1895), 434.
³¹ Andrew S. Richmond, "Chronology of Bishop Chase's Life," *The Papers of Philander Chase*, <http://www2.kenyon.edu/Khistory/chase/welcome2.htm>.
³² Timothy Hopkins, *The Kellogs in the Old World and the New, Volume I* (San Francisco: Sunset Press and Photo Engraving Co., 1903), 454.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

³³ *Brandon, Vermont: A History of the Town, 1761-1961* (Brandon, VT: The Town of Brandon, 1961), 53.

³⁴ *Rochester, Vermont: Its History 1780-1975* (Burlington, VT: Queen City Printers, 1975), 61-63.

³⁵ Earl N. Davis, Jr. and Mary O. Davis, ed., *Rochester Remembers 1781-1981* (Randolph, VT: Herald Printery, 1981), 14.

³⁶ Abby Maria Hemenway, *The History of Rutland County, Vermont* (White River Junction, VT: The White River Paper Co., 1882), 468.

³⁷ *Brandon, Vermont: A History of the Town, 1761-1961* (Brandon, VT: The Town of Brandon, 1961), 49.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 1

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 2

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Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 3

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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INTERVIEWS

Dutton, John. Interview with Devin Colman, October 10, 2007.

Greenlee, Helen. Interview with Devin Colman, October 10, 2007.

Nikolaidis, Nick. Interview with Devin Colman, September 20,
2007.

Richardson, Eric and Mike Ryan. Interview with Devin Colman,
June 30, 2007.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 1

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, VT

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Boundary Description

The boundary of Old Christ Church is shown as the heavy black line on the accompanying map entitled *Survey Plat: Land of Old Christ Church Parish, Bethel Twp., Vermont*. This survey map was prepared in March 1986 by Frank B. Lamson, LS #553.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the parcel of land historically associated with Old Christ Church and Old Christ Church Cemetery.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photograph Labels Page 1 Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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The following information is the same for all photographs:

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont
Photographs by Devin Colman
Digital images on file at the Vermont Division for Historic
Preservation

Photograph #1
View southeast towards Old Christ Church and Christ Church
Cemetery
Photographed September 27, 2007

Photograph #2
View southeast towards Old Christ Church
Photographed June 29, 2007

Photograph #3
View northwest towards Old Christ Church
Photographed September 19, 2007

Photograph #4
Detail view southwest of tower
Photographed June 29, 2007

Photograph #5
View northwest of Christ Church Cemetery and Old Christ Church
Photographed September 19, 2007

Photograph #6
View southeast of Christ Church Cemetery
Photographed June 29, 2007

Photograph #7
View southeast of church interior (taken from gallery)
Photographed June 29, 2007

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photograph Labels Page 2

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

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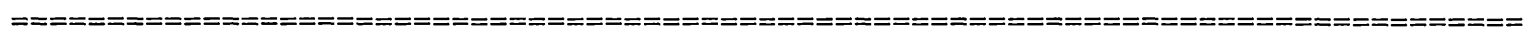
Photograph #8
View southwest of church interior
Photographed June 29, 2007

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Property Owners Page 1

Old Christ Church
Bethel, Windsor County, Vermont

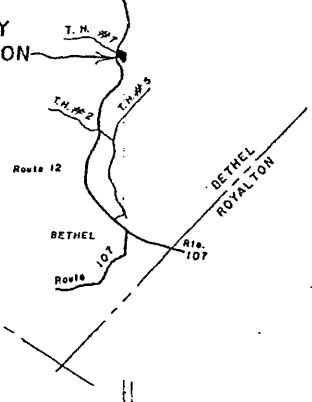


1: Christ Church, North Main Street, Bethel, VT 05032



ATTENTION
 THIS MAP DOES NOT MEET
 REQUIREMENTS OF 27 V.S.A.
 CH. 17. FOR RECORDING
 OR FILING WITH TOWN CLERK

**SURVEY
 LOCATION**



TOTAL AREA = 2.68 acres

C. D. B. S. WRIGHT
 BK 46/PG 128
 BK 40/PG 369 (described)

(C) → (D) : S 56°-30'-00" E, 372.24 ft.
 (See BK 36/PG 30)

R. KELLOGG, et al
 BK 50/PG 7-9

LEGEND

	5/8" Rebar, set
	Pin/Pipe, found
	Stone Post, found
	Wire/Wood Fence
	Boundary Point
	Utility Pole

NOTES:

- (1) Tie Line (A) → (B) : N 23°-34'-18" E, 148.97 ft.
 - (2) Bearings are related to the magnetic meridian of the deed cited as Book 36, Page 30. (1932)
 - (3) Deed citations are to the Bethel Land Records.
 - (4) Theodolite/EDM Traverse
 - (5) No attempt to determine the legal extent of current highway rights.
 - (6) Magnetic Declinations:
 1930 : 14°-47'
 1985 : 15°-20'
- Survey Assistant: Branda Field
 Map by: Liz Trott

The boundary lines shown are consistent with the cited deeds, physical evidence found, and are correct to the best of my professional knowledge and belief.

Frank B. Lamson
 Frank B. Lamson, LS # 553
 South Royalton, Vermont

SURVEY PLAT
 Land of
Christ Church Parish
 Bethel Twp., Vermont

SCALE: 1" = 50'
 MARCH 1986