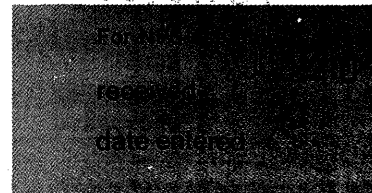


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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. Peter's Church

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number N/A N/A not for publication

city, town Gentilly N/A vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~ N/A

state Minnesota code 22 county Polk code 119

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A <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 Congregation, St. Peter's Church (Gentilly)

street & number Route 2

city, town Crookston vicinity of state MN

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Polk County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Crookston state Minnesota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Minnesota Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society -- Fort Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Constructed in 1914-1915 to replace the earlier 1882 frame church, St. Peter's Church in Gentilly is an excellent example of brick Neo-Gothic architecture. The church is executed on a rectangular, central-aisle plan with an apsidal projection at the rear. The roof is in the form of a simple gable.

The front, or principal facade, is highly articulated in terms of architectural detailing. It is symmetrical in arrangement with a central entry incorporated within the base of a prominent tower and flanked by two lancet windows with quatrefoil tracery. This tracery is repeated in the central tower window with its double-tier tripartite stained glass panels surmounted by a large quatrefoil in the arch. Engaged buttresses are situated at the corners of the central tower and at the corner tourelles; the buttresses also define the four longitudinal bays at the sides of the church. The tower is crowned by an octagonal belfry and an octagonal spire. Gable and eave detailing is in the form of low-relief corbells.

The interior of the church is embellished with elaborately stencilled patterns and frescoes executed in shades of blue, crimson, beige, green and gold. The apse end of the sanctuary is the setting for the elaborately carved Gothic-style high altar and two side altars. Stained glass windows donated to the church as memorials to former parishioners depict Biblical subjects.

The adjacent rectory is a two story frame residence constructed in 1902. It is essentially cubiform in plan and is covered with a low, truncated hip roof. The principal facade is symmetrical with a one story full-front porch. The porch has paired Doric columns and a spindle-work balustrade.

Both the church and rectory are well maintained in an excellent state of preservation; they continue to serve original functions.

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 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 checked="" 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 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 1902 & 1914-15 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

St. Peter's Church and Rectory is significant as a well-preserved example of Neo-Gothic Church architecture and as an important reminder of the efforts of French Canadians to establish a parish which reflects a strong sense of national heritage and community. Through the 1840s and 1870s, large numbers of French Canadians made their way to the principal Minnesota metropolitan areas of Mendota, St. Paul, and St. Anthony. Following the influx of settlers who progressively moved north and westward as Minnesota territory was opened to settlement, many of these French Canadians made their way into the Red River Valley. By 1880, the Great Northern and Northern Pacific Railroads had reached Polk County and promotional materials prepared by already-established French Canadians appealed to other French Canadians to settle in the new French-speaking communities. Distinguishing these communities from other Minnesota frontier settlements and appealing to French Canadians as an ethnic group in particular was the inter-relationship that existed between parish and community. For Catholic French Canadians, this socio-ecclesiastical structure was the essential factor in preserving group identity. This cultural pattern is evident in St. Peter's Catholic Church in Gentilly, whose congregation, organized in 1879, numbered 118 French Canadian families and only two Irish families. The trials of settlement, disease, bad weather and subsequent crop failures had their effect on the early members of St. Peter's and some began to leave. In 1881, to counteract this, Reverend Alexandre Bouchard established a governing unit fashioned after the national parish system in French Canada, in which the working roles of the priest, parish council, and parishioners are defined. Reverend Bouchard's system was effective, the parish was saved from fragmentation, and shortly thereafter the first rectory and church were constructed. In 1888 Reverend Elie Theillon was transferred to the parish and found the community still agriculturally depressed. Seizing the initiative and utilizing the church-community structure already in place, Reverend Theillon sought to improve the agricultural conditions of the area. In a region heavily dependent on wheat, he campaigned to introduce diversified farming practices, resulting in the founding of the Gentilly Dairy Association in 1895. The cheese factory, whose cheese products won national acclaim, operated until its sale to Land O'Lakes in 1933; dividend payments to farmers continued until 1968. When not personally endorsing the sale of Gentilly Cheese, Reverend Theillon oversaw the construction of the present church building, in 1915. Under the leadership of Reverend Theillon and subsequent French Canadian priests, the homogeneity of St. Peter's Parish has remained. The creation of a commercially profit-making venture, the diversification of agriculture, and the creation of social-religious institutions and organizations have fostered a strong sense of heritage in Gentilly. St. Peter's Church and Rectory stands as the pivotal reminder of the common French Canadian nationality and faith of the community.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Benoit, Virgil. "Gentilly: A French Canadian Community in the Minnesota Red River Valley," Minnesota History, 44:279-281 (Winter, 1975).
Compendium of History and Biography of Polk County, Minnesota. Ed. by R.I. Holcombe and William H. Bingham. Minneapolis: W.H. Bingham and Co., 1916.
They Chose Minnesota. A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups. Ed. by June Drenning Holmquist. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1981.

10. Geographical Data

St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1981.

Acreage of nominated property 3 1/2 acres

Quadrangle name Red Lake Falls Quad, MINN.

Quadrangle scale 15

UMT References Latitude: 47° 47' 33" Longitude: 96° 26' 52"

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

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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

See continuation sheet - page 1

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

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Roth, Research Historian; Charles Nelson, Historical Architect

organization Minnesota Historical Society date May 6, 1982

street & number Fort Snelling History Center telephone 612-726-1171

city or town St. Paul state Minnesota

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

Russell W. Fridley

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 7/9/82

For NPS use only

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

Alton Byers
Entered in the
National Register

date 8/19/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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



Continuation sheet St. Peter's Church
Gentilly, MN; Polk County Item number 10

Page 1

Legal Description:

Commencing at the quarter post on the south line of section 20, Township 150 North, Range 45 West of the 5th principal meridian; thence north along 114 line 709 feet to a stone monument the place of beginning; thence north along said line 823 feet to a stone monument; thence at right angles west 178 feet to a stone monument; thence along the boundary of Reno's Creek south 15° 30" east 253 feet to a monument; thence south 39° 45" west 325 feet to a stone monument; thence south 19° 50" east 360 feet to the center of the creek and stone monument; thence north 59° 55" east 200 feet to the place of beginning. Containing 3½ acres more or less. Magnetic variation 12° 35" east according to Arnold's survey thereof.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

for Keeper Melvin Lyman
11/19/89

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

**Note: These changes apply to
St. Peter's Church in Polk County,
Minnesota.**

REFERENCE NUMBER: 82002994

STATE: MINNESOTA

COUNTY: Polk

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): Church of St. Peter (Catholic)

CITY:

VICINITY OF: Crookston

ADDRESS: off U. S. Hwy. 2

CERTIFICATION DATE:

REMOVED DATE:

COMMENTS:

Nina M. Archabal

Nina M. Archabal
State Historic Preservation Officer

JUN 17 1988

Date