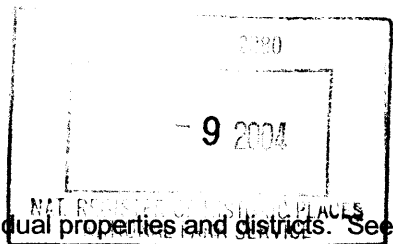


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Fronting 4th Street, between Cedar and Spruce Streets not for publication _____
city or town Pearce vicinity _____
state Arizona code AZ county Cochise code 003 zip code 85625

3. 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally X statewide _____ locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James W. Rawlin AZSHPD 7 JUNE 2004
Signature of certifying official Date

ARIZONA STATE PARKS
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Edson H. Beall

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):

hex
Signature of Keeper

7/21/04
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
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Religion

Sub: Religious facility/Church

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Vacant

Sub: _____

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

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Southwest Territorial

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

roof Corrugated metal

walls Stucco on adobe masonry

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)

Architecture

Period of Significance ca. 1916-17 - 1954

Significant Dates ca. 1916-17

Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder Unknown

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

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

Bibliography (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: Catholic Diocese of Tucson

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	12	611390	3530225	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 James M. Kelly (edited by William S. Collins, Arizona State Historic Preservation Office, Dec. 2003)

organization Pearce Preservation Society date Feb. 17, 1997

street & number 1007 Justin St. telephone (520) 826-3190

city or town Pearce state AZ zip code 85625

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 James C. Olson

street & number 710 W. Quail Dr. telephone (520) 625-4940

city or town Green Valley state AZ zip code 85714

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Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church
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county and State

SECTION 7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

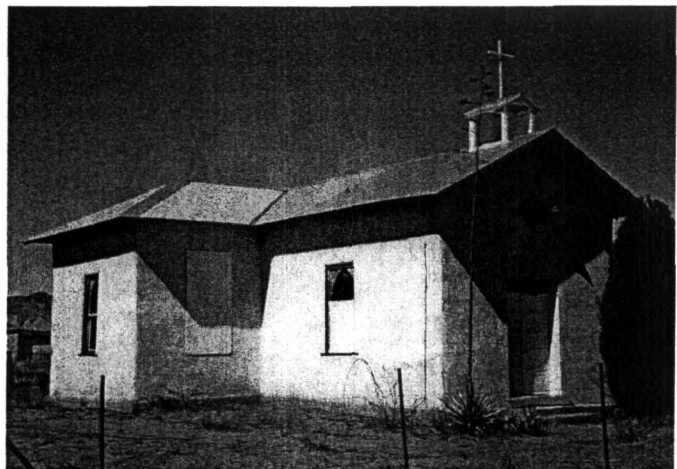
Summary

Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church is located in Pearce, Arizona. It is a one-story adobe building constructed with a cruciform plan. It has an intersecting roof with a gable at the main entrance and hipped roofs on the other three arms of the cross. A small, cupola-style belfry is above the entrance gable straddling the roof peak.

Setting

Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church is located in the small community of Pearce, located in the Sulphur Springs Valley in Cochise County. It is approximately 28 miles south of Willcox. Very close to the west are the Dragoon Mountains. To the east is the flat plain of the Sulphur Springs Valley. A few miles to the north is a dry lake called the Willcox Playa. The community of Sunsites, founded in 1961, is almost adjacent to Pearce. The combined population of the two communities in 1999 was approximately 1,500 people, a large portion of who are retirees. Most of this population resides in Sunsites. Farms, ranches and other agricultural settlements are scattered further away from Pearce.

Pearce retains only a very small number of buildings from its earliest days in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when it thrived as a mining town. The Pearce General Store, built in 1896, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The other two remaining public buildings are the Pearce Elementary School, constructed in 1912, and the Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church. Most of the rest of the historic town that held as many as 1,500 people in 1919 is now only ruins. Modern housing is scattered thinly in the area, a characteristic of the



Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church

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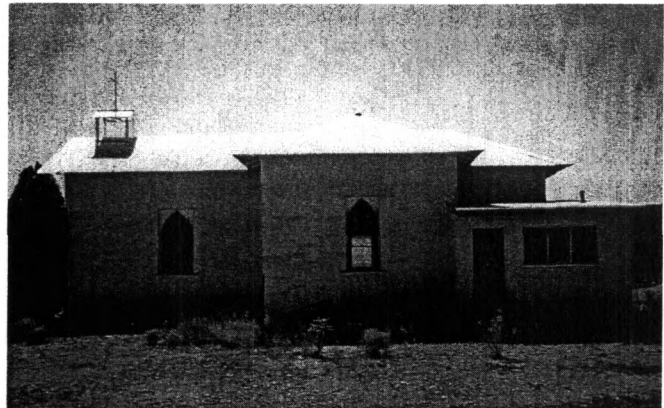
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automobile era. But while the historic town is now mostly gone, the general environment of the area remains relatively unchanged. Nearby to Pearce is the site of the Commonwealth Mine, a gold mine that was the reason for the town's founding. The undeveloped Dragoon Mountains frame the town's western horizon, while to the east, agriculture and ranching continue to dominate the landscape.

Construction materials and design

The Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church is constructed of adobe, a common historic building material in this arid region of Arizona. It was a small building of approximately 1,200 sq. ft. Its most distinctive design element is its cruciform plan that clearly distinguishes it as a church. This identification is enhanced by the small cupola-style belfry over the entrance gable. The exterior walls are stuccoed while the interior walls and ceiling are plastered. It has a tongue-and-groove hardwood floor.



View of west side of building showing elements of cruciform design and non-historic addition.

The intersecting roof form is gabled only over the front entrance. The other three arms of the cross have hipped roofs. It is roofed with corrugated steel on 1x12 boards supported on 2x6 joists, having an overhanging eave of 24 inches on all sides.

Specific features of the original church include the wood frame, hipped roof belfry and double-hung wood sash windows, which have been modified to appear from a distance to be of stained glass and gothic arches. An historic photo taken before the building was restuccoed (pre 1964) indicates that the affectation of arched windows dates back to the historic era.

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Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church, date unknown

Alterations

A 14x14 ft. sacristy was added by filling in the northwest quadrant of the cruciform plan. The year of construction of the addition is not know for sure, but it is constructed of 8x8x16 stuccoed CMU on concrete foundation and slab with a wood frame shed style roof. The sacristy annex could be easily removed, and is thus considered a reversible alteration.

Integrity

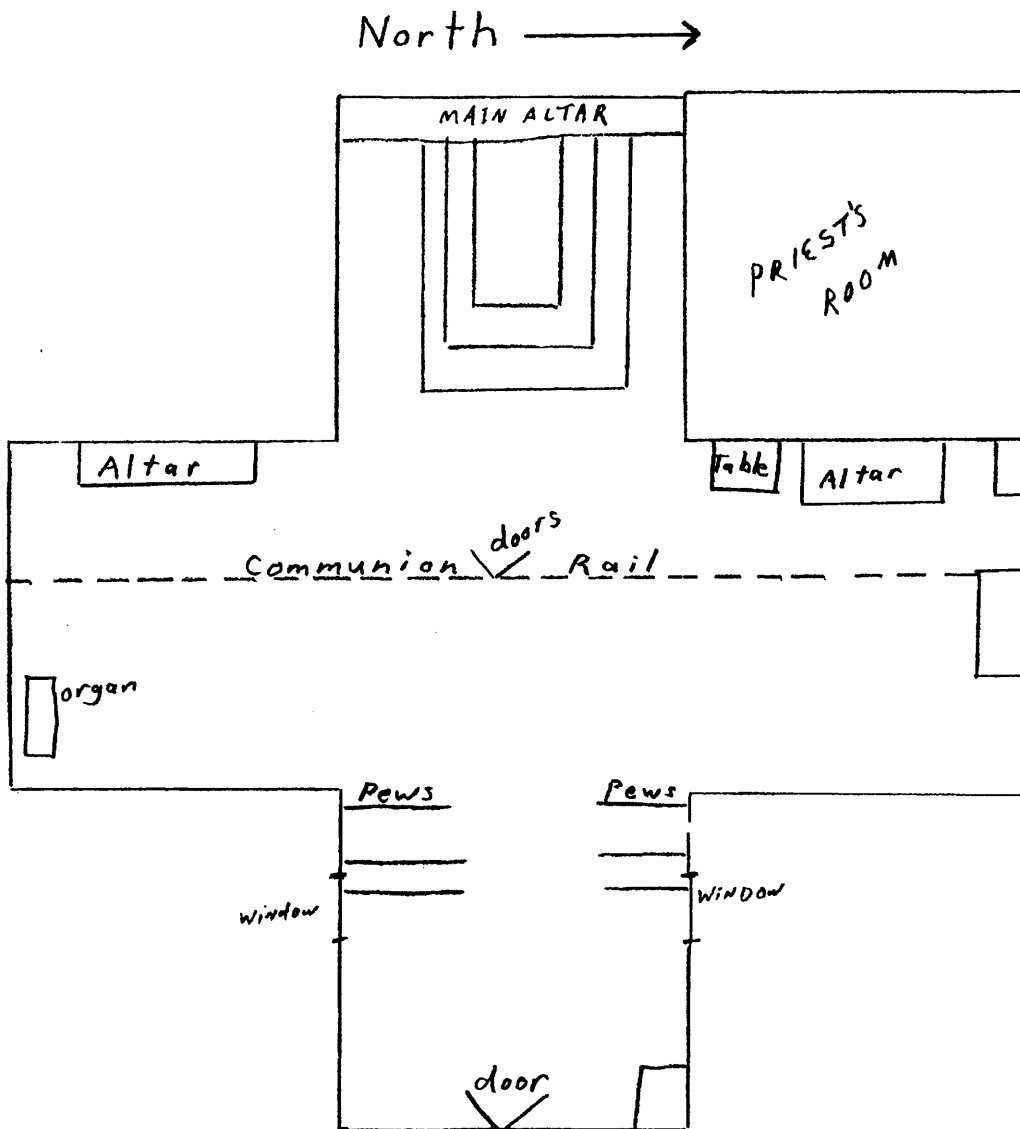
The property is in good condition and, other than the sacristy addition, little has been done to alter the exterior or the interior structure or finishes. However, all religious furnishings, including the pews, altar, statues, pictures, and the exterior bell, have been removed. The building retains its ability to visually convey its historic character.

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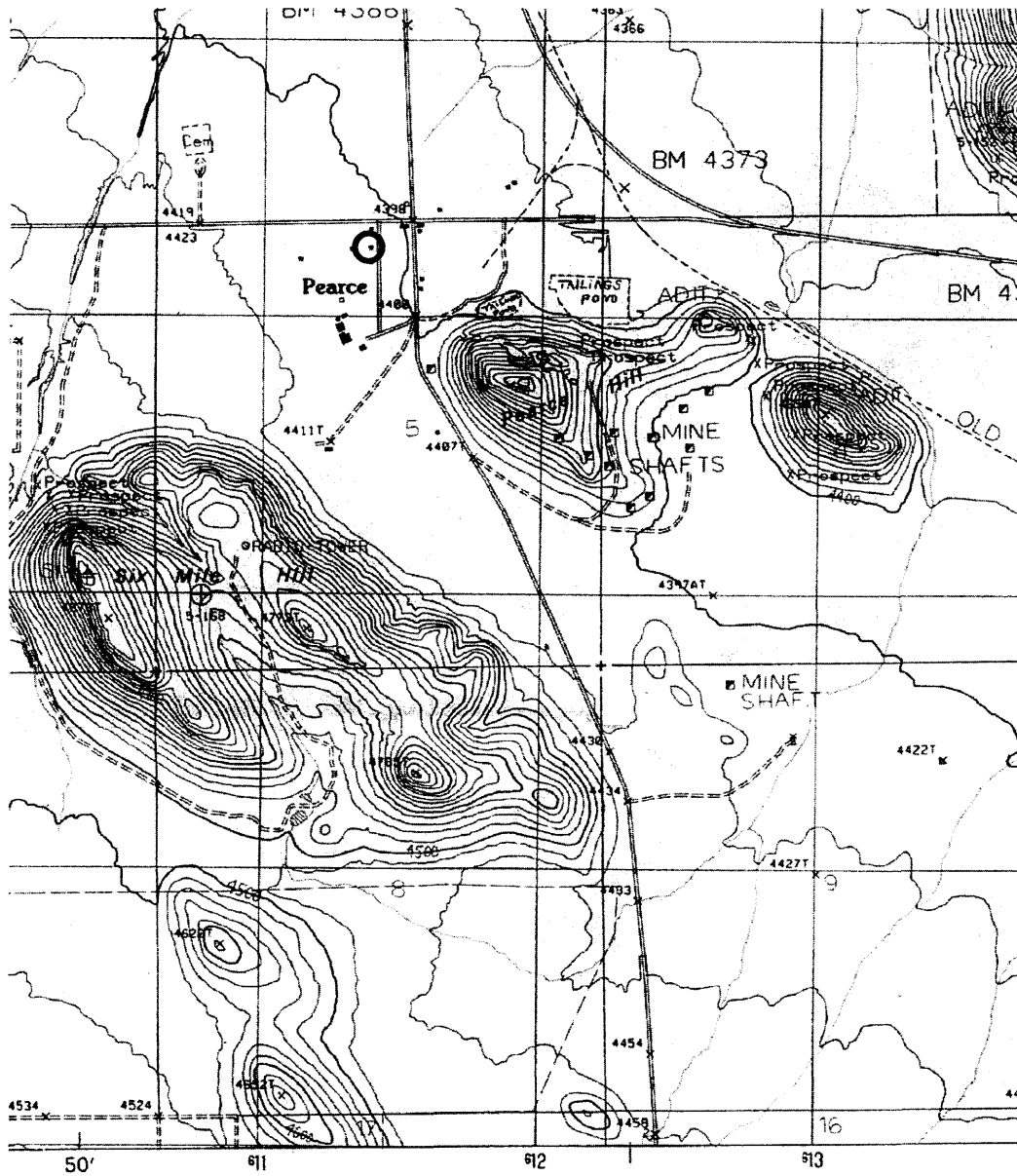
Sketch of Our Lady of Victory Church illustrating some of historic internal arrangements. All religious objects and furnishings have been removed.

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Detail of U.S.G.S. map showing location of Pearce, Arizona in relation to local mines.

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SECTION 8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church is considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A as a rare surviving building associated with the heyday of Pearce, Arizona when it was a thriving mining community. The church is one of only three significant public buildings remaining in the town and each conveys an important aspect of community development. The National Register-listed Pearce General Store conveys the importance of commerce. The Pearce Elementary School represents the public sector and education. The church conveys the importance of religious institutions in providing a place for social gatherings and cohesion. It is also significant as a church where both the local Anglo and Hispanic Catholic population gathered together for services. The Our Lady of Victory Catholic church is also a rare example of a vernacular adobe church. The Arizona inventory includes 1,032 adobe buildings. Of these only fifteen are churches. This building, constructed in 1917, represents the post-territorial adobe revival period with concrete foundations and cement stucco. Unlike other Southwestern states, Arizona has very few rural vernacular adobe churches. The only other known examples are St. Ann's Catholic Church in Tubac and one of the buildings at the Sacred Heart Church in Tombstone (both listed on the National Register). Because it is a rare example of a rare building type, the church in Pearce is eligible for listing under Criterion C at a statewide level of significance. It meets National Register Criterion Consideration A as a rare surviving building associated with the community's early history and as an important example of the type of building that encouraged community development in Pearce. It is nominated at the local level of significance.

The Mining Town of Pearce

Following Ed Schieffelin's discovery of silver that led to the founding of Tombstone in 1879 and the establishment of Cochise County in 1881, the southeast corner of Arizona Territory was intensely prospected for precious metals. One Tombstone miner in the 1880s, James Pearce, had two sons, John and William, who established a ranch in the Sulphur Springs Valley. It was while resting during a ride in this region that James Pearce discovered rich gold ore in 1894. He staked a claim that became the Commonwealth Mine. This mine produced some millions of dollars in gold ore over the next several years. Operations temporarily ceased in 1904 following a mine cave-in. The next year, a new operation of treating old tailings using cyanide restored its vitality. The

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mining operation continued for several more years, but at a declining rate. By the 1930s, the community of Pearce was nearly a ghost town.

Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church

Early religious meetings in Pearce were roughly organized and held either in the open or in crude structures. Members of some fifteen Protestant denominations came together in 1906 to organize a viable church, which they named the Church of Christ. Only about

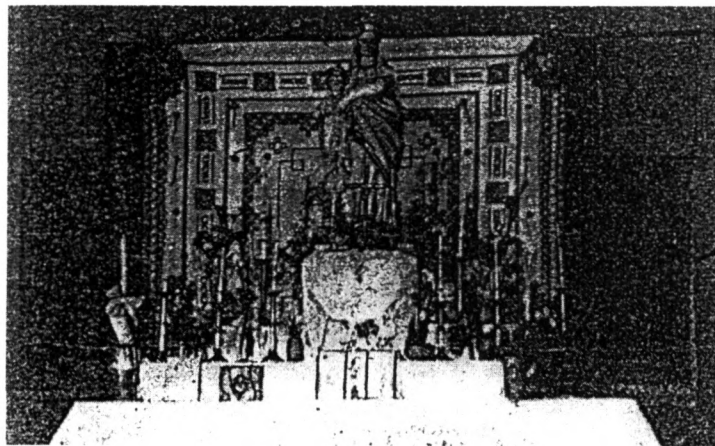


Photo of altar at the first Easter service, believed from 1917. From *Extension Magazine*, 1918.

thirty people were a part of this organization. Because of the mine's heavy reliance on Mexican labor, there were also a number of Catholics in the community.

The Diocese of Tucson was created to serve the growing Catholic population of Arizona Territory in 1879. Small towns in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Arizona typically had one of three types of churches. Parish churches had their own church building and priest. The mission church had a building, but was served by a visiting priest from another town. Finally, stations had neither building nor resident priest, again with a

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visiting priest providing services in whatever facility was available. Pearce first appeared in the *Official Catholic Directory* in 1900 as a station of Benson. In 1902, it was listed as a station of Nogales. There is no mention of Pearce again until 1912 when it was listed as a station of Solomonville. The name "Our Lady of Victory" first appears in the directory in 1917, and then as a mission of Solomonville. It became a mission of Tombstone the following year.

The church building was constructed by local Mexican laborers. The exact date of construction is unknown, but it appears likely to have been in late 1916 and/or early 1917. Again, it was in 1917 that the church is first mentioned by name as a mission, implying that the town had a building, although no resident priest. In a 1915 letter, Solomonville's missionary priest, Rev. Joseph Raida, writes of Pearce: "at this place I need very badly a little chapele [sic] of some kind.... If I had a little room to live in and a little chappel [sic] this [lack of success there] would be different." The Catholic Church Extension Society made a grant of \$500 on October 17, 1916 to assist in creation of the mission church in Pearce. In a 1918 *Extension Magazine* article, Raida describes the town of Pearce's first Catholic celebration of Easter in 1917. Rev. Raida stated: "Our new little church is a credit to our holy Faith and has been very material in helping to build up a congregation of faithful Catholics." He added: "We still owe \$400 on this church and the poor miners find it very difficult to raise money to pay the debt," due to declining productivity in the mine. A date of construction in early 1917 is also evident in the choice of name as that was the same period that the United States entered World War I.

Discrimination in work wages and residential neighborhoods was evident from the early days of the town's existence. There were many Mexicans in the town who felt the brunt of this discrimination. The Catholic Church was one place where they and the Catholic Anglo community could come together.

Lillian Cheng, in her "A History of Pearce, Arizona" (1996), relates that in 1924 an anonymous woman donated \$500 to the diocese to repair Pearce's church, but with the stipulation that it be re-dedicated to St. Isabel (also known as St. Elizabeth). Fear that the congregation would object, the priest initially only placed a statue of St. Elizabeth on a side altar. In 1932 it was placed on the main altar.

The area suffered during the Depression years but the Church continued to serve the needs of the residents. By 1935 there were less than 50 people living in town. The

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visiting priest had little time to devote to Pearce and so nuns from the Order of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Tucson often made regular rounds throughout the area during the 1930s, teaching children religion. In 1933, they taught fifteen children in Pearce.

There is little information about the church in the 1940s and 1950s. By 1961 it was apparently not in use, although its statues and altar cloths remained in place. It was reported that one elderly Mexican woman faithfully kept the building up in these years. The founding of the town of Sunsites nearby in 1961 increased the area's population. By 1963, the parishioners had organized to maintain the church and held many social and fund-raising events. When enough money had been collected, a parishioner, Mr. Colangelo, who owned the local hardware store, built new pews. Records kept by these parishioners show that they also added a gas heater, water pipes and sink. This congregation again demonstrated a meeting of the Mexican and Anglo cultures. Such families as the Becks and the Hernandezes worked and worshipped side by side at Our Lady of Victory.

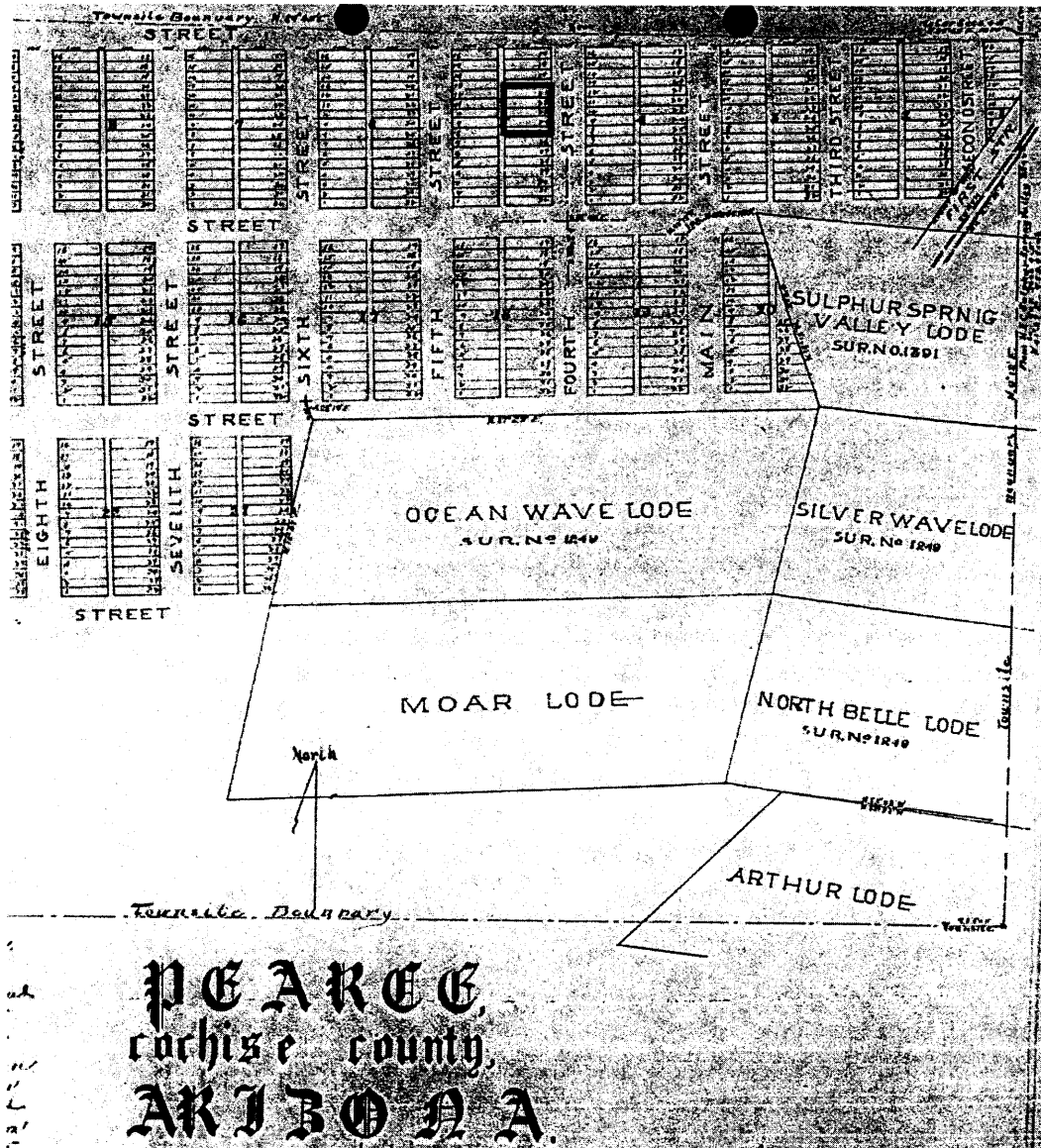
To accommodate the now growing population of the area, a new parish (St. Jude's) was established in 1969 just about four miles north of old Pearce. The Tucson Diocese sold Our Lady of Victory. The parishioners removed the old bell and installed it in the new parish of St. Jude's where it continues to be rung to this day. It has been in private ownership since that time and has been used for various purposes including rental for storage. Although structurally sound, it shows the effects of neglect.

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Old townsite map of Pearce showing location of property.

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SECTION 9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cheng, Lillian, "A History of Pearce, Arizona," *Cochise Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Spring 1996, pp. 32-3.

Raida, Rev. Joseph, "Making the Rounds of My Mission," *Extension Magazine*, March 1918, pp. 16-7.

Raida, Rev. Joseph, "Missionary Life and Experiences in Arizona," *Extension Magazine*, December 1916, pp. 5-6, 30.

Van Slyck, Abigail A., letter to Grace McKernan (Pearce Preservation Society), 2 February 1999.

SECTION 10. GEOGRAPHIC DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 & N 7.75' of 35 Block 5 of Pearce Townsite. Township 18S, Range 25E, Sect. 5, NE1/4 of NW1/4.

Boundary Justification

The verbal boundary description describes the existing lot lines of the property. Only the building itself is considered contributing.