OMB No. 1024-0018 Expires 10-31-87

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

For NPS use only

received

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historic	Church	of the	Holy Comm	union		
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6. Rep	resentat	ion i	n Exis	sting	Surveys	
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7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one		
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fair	unexposed				

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Church of the Holy Communion, built in 1886-1888 in Norwood, Bergen New Jersey, is an outstanding example of rural Gothic Revival architecture. Cross-shaped in plan, the church has a ecclesiastical single-aisled nave with semicircular apse on the north end, a single transept arm on the west side and a one-story wood-frame wing, built as a church school room, on the east. Its coursed rubble stone walls are supported by stone buttresses which divide the bays of the nave wall. Steep gables define the nave and transept, articulated with stone corbels and coping, and topped with stone Celtic The roof, now surfaced with asphalt shingles, was originally slate. crosses.

The church is a reconstruction of an earlier structure, built in 1877, which was destroyed by fire only nine years after its completion. Under the supervision of the original architect, J. Cleveland Cady, the existing structure was built on the original foundations and made to duplicate the previous building with some minor differences. The original church had gently curved eaves and a chimney in the gable of the transept, while the current church does not. It is also likely that the original church did not incorporate the church school wing on the east side, this being added slightly later, according to the minutes of the vestry. A plaque on the east wall, cast from the molten remains of the sanctuary ornaments, commemorates the original structure.

The church is entered at the south through a single-bay entrance porch with a gable roof supported by heavy wooden brackets and stone piers. Decorative vergeboards and pendants ornament the gable. Double doors with molded and glass panels complete the entrance.

Flanking the entrance are two pointed arched stained glass windows. A rose window is set in the center of the gable. The transept facade is pierced by three stained glass lancet windows, and the apse is lighted by seven narrow, round-headed windows. Lining the sides of the nave are paired rectangular windows of clear diamond panes with stained glass borders. All the windows have stone sills and the majority have stone voussoirs.

The three windows of the transept were executed circa 1893 by the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company. At least two others, but possibly more, were made by the J. & R.. Lamb Studios in nearby Tenafly, with the exception of the window east of the front door, which was made by parishioner Lulu Switzer and installed in 1934 in memory of her brother. The windows are richly colored, mostly with vibrant reds and blues. However, the Tiffany windows are executed in more muted, naturalistic tones of blues and greens, as was typical of their designer. The memorial windows depict religious subjects, while the others have geometric and floral motifs.

On the interior, the roof of the three-bay nave is supported by heavy arched timber trusses. Walls are plain plaster, painted a cream color. The apse, with a ribbed ceiling, is painted light blue and furnished with freestanding brass fixtures, in addition to a white marble altar and baptismal font. The altar

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railing is of wood and brass, with Gothic floral flourishes. Other brass furnishings include the lectern, pulpit and a highly decorative lamp, which is suspended over the altar.

The church exists as part of a picturesque ecclesiastical complex which includes a rectory (1886-88), cloister and parish hall (1930), and recent church school building (1968). The rectory, also designed by Cady, was executed in the Shingle Style and is sympathetic to the pastoral character of the church. The twentieth century additions to the complex were designed with special attention given to harmonizing with the existing architecture.

The rectory, standing approximately 100 feet southeast of the church, is a two-and-a-half story building sheathed in wood shingles. The building is rectangular in plan, with a bulging tower at the south corner. entrance is located on the west elevation, the main elevation faces Blanch Avenue to the south. This elevation is characterized by a triangular composition, created by the broad gable roof sloping to the first floor. elevation, two gabled dormers pierce the roof at the second floor level and an enclosed porch extends the width of the house. Throughout, the windows are asymmetrically placed, some in groups of two and three. The entrance facade, with coursed rubble on the ground story, is dominated by a porch with a gabled roof supported on large wood brackets. The gable is embellished with carving and infilled with a simple truss. A two-story, shingle-clad wing was added on the north side to provide a garage with a room above, sometime during the tenure of Rector J. Foster Savidge, between 1925 and 1963.

The parish hall is connected to the east side of the church by an open cloister, eight bays long, with piers resembling buttresses. Built of randomly laid rubble, the parish hall is similar in scale, massing, and texture to the church, with a steeply gabled roof. Both the cloister and parish hall were built in 1930, the gift of Mrs. Caroline Savidge, mother of the rector. (Non-contributing)

The church school building, constructed in 1968, is one story in height, with stone walls capped by a shallow hipped roof with overhanging eaves. It is joined to the parish hall by a short hyphen resembling a cloister, with stone buttresses dividing bays enclosed with glass. Because of its fairly recent construction, the church school building does not contribute to the significance of the complex.

At various times throughout its history, the grounds of the church were occupied by structures which are no longer extant. These include carriage sheds

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and a barn where the cloister and parish hall now stand. For a few years, there was also a tennis court, which was installed in July, 1913 at a cost "not in excess of \$60.00." The court was dismantled in 1917, and the posts and netting placed on the east line of the church property, but have since been removed.

¹ Minutes of the Vestry, 2 July 13, p. 8, 7 July 13, p. 83.

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric archeology-historic agricultureX architectureX art commerce communications		military music	religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1886-88	Builder/Architect J.	Cleveland Cady	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Church of the Holy Communion, built in 1886-1888, is an outstanding example of late Gothic Revival church architecture. Designed in the tradition of medieval English parish churches, it is Norwood's second oldest church and the only one of its kind in the borough. It is especially significant as an example of the early work of J. Cleveland Cady (1837-1919), a prominent New York City architect who designed numerous churches and significant institutional buildings during the late nineteenth century.

The small stone church is the focal point of a picturesque assemblage of structures, including a rectory, built in 1888, cloister and parish hall built in 1930, and a school built in 1968. The rectory is an excellent example of early Shingle Style. The parish hall and cloister contribute to the character of the complex, while the school is a compatible modern addition. Set back from the street on harmoniously landscaped grounds, the complex contributes to the aesthetic character of this rural community.

The church is also representative of the religious and developmental history of Norwood. The Church was founded by a small Episcopalian congregation which included wealthy New Yorkers who vacationed in Norwood for the summer. Norwood had become accessible to New Yorkers with the opening of the Northern Railroad of New Jersey in 1859 and construction of a depot in Norwood in 1870. In the 1860's Norwood's picturesque wooded landscapes had impressed J. Wyman Jones, developer of Englewood, with the area's potential as a rural resort and upper middle class railroad suburb. Jones acquired large holdings of land around the railroad line and subdivided it. By 1880, the village had a hotel (Norwood House, 1867), a one-room school (built in 1875), the Presbyterian Church of Norwood (c. 1870) and about sixty homes. However, it remained a small rural community, of which the church is illustrative.

Initially after the congregation was formed in 1870, its members met in a hall in Closter. The first church structure was built, on land donated by wealthy parishioners and opened on September 16, 1877. Tragically, the original church was destroyed by fire only nine years later. On the night of Saturday, November 6, 1886, the church caught fire during a fierce storm. The accident was vividly recorded in the minutes of the vestry:

A little flock of devoted parishioners and sympathising neighbors stood near, men and women, in the pitiless storm and driving rain and saw their beloved little church burn up, unable to do anything or to save any of its contents.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets.

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Judicious effort saved the sheds and the half-built rectory, not then roofed, though near, was in no especial danger. (4)

The stone walls were so "chipped and fissured as to be of little value." (5) Undaunted, the congregation quickly sprang into action to rebuild their church. Meeting in the home of one of the parishioners, it was resolved on November 10th, "to take immediate steps to restore the building under the supervission (sic) of the architect, Mr. J. C. Cady, and as nearly as possible after the original designs." A building committee was formed of William Oakley, Nathaniel E. Wood and J. H. Bloodgood.

Seven months later, the new church building was substantially complete, although "progressing more slowly than could be wished." It was hoped that it would be ready for occupation "before many weeks." At an informal meeting of the congregation on June 26, 1887, the Building Committee reported that the original church was being duplicated as closely as possible, with some necessary improvements, such as the Sunday School wing on the east side. The building was also to be made more fireproof, to avoid the fate of the first. These improvements were costly.

It was found that if the Sunday School room was added and such changes made as seemed necessary to provide against fire, there would have to be procured in addition to the money received for insurance, at least \$4,900.

Although this was a staggering sum for a small congregation, the improvements were considered essential. All the needed funds were raised from voluntary contributions. Among the contributers was David Bingham, who, though not a member, "kindly allowed the builders to take from his quarry all the stone required to rebuild the walls."

These stones were then hand-cut by Henry Argenti for \$3.00 a day.

While the congregation was able to start meeting in the building by June 1887, it was not finally complete until April 1888. When finished, the new church was considered "a better building than the one destroyed." The final cost was \$8,229.69. The furnishings, including the marble font, and brass fixtures such as the altar cross, vases, bookrest and lectern, were all donated by parish members and friends. Mr. William H. Oakley donated the white marble altar and Adele D. Oakley, his wife, donated the large pipe organ.

The magnificent windows in the transept were produced by the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Co. of New York., as indicated by the signature in the lower right

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hand corner. Donated by William H. Oakley and his children in memory of his wife and their mother, the windows are excellent examples of Tiffany's work. They are figurative, with Christ in the center, flanked by female figures—a praying angel on the left and a kneeling woman, perhaps representing Adele Oakley, on the right. The figures are enlivened by colorful, dynamic drapery and backed by realistic landscapes.

Louis Comfort Tiffany, who first began working with glass in the 1880s, is widely recognized as one of the masters of the medium. His work is distinguished by the quality of naturalism he imparted to his subjects and the opalescent brilliance of the glass he developed. Rather than brushing color onto the glass, Tiffany revived the medieval practice of coloring the molten material with metals and chemicals; details were layered between pages of the glass, rather than simply fastened to the surface. (14)

There are other stained glass windows in addition to those by the Tiffany studios. The rose window over the entry porch was given by Mrs. Oakley and the vivid chancel windows, of geometric floral design, were donated by Mrs. S.M. Starr. The original windows of the side and front walls were clear glass with a border of multicolored panes. Three were replaced with memorial windows in the 1930's and 1950's. To the west of the entrance, is a window given in memory of Harry Condit Calahan by his family in 1953. To the east of the entrance is one made by Lulu W. Switzer in memory of her brother James Morrison Womeldorff, installed in 1934. On the east wall, is a window given in 1958 by the parents of Kim Wray Lyons, who died as a young boy.

The Calahan and Lyons windows were signed by the J. & R. Lamb Studios, another leading producer of artistic stained glass, as well as mosaics, carved woodwork and furniture. The work of the Lamb Studios is nationally recognized, with commissions in every state in the nation. Among them are many churches, including the West End Collegiate Church and Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, and chapels at Stanford University and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, as well as libraries and public buildings. The Lambs' work also received international recognition. Their window entitled, "Religion Enthroned," commissioned by the U.S. government for its central pavilion at the 1900 International Exposition in Paris won two gold medals.

Joseph and Richard Lamb founded the Lamb Studios in New York City in 1857, making it the oldest stained glass company in the United States. Like Cady, they had a cottage in Bergen County, in Creskill. Thus, they could have produced the original windows in the church, which are unsigned. The business was carried on

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by several generations of the family, moving to Tenafly in 1935. In 1970, the family sold the business, and the studios were relocated. They are presently in Philmont, New York. (1/)

At the same time the church was being completed, so was the Shingle Style rectory, begun two years earlier in 1885. According to a June 1887 entry in the vestry minutes, the cost was "approximately \$6,100, of which \$2,400 were provided by the advances in equal sums of Mrs. William H. Oakley and Mr. J. H. Bloodgood, as a loan."

However, a later entry, on April (79) 1888, states that the rectory was completed then, at a cost of \$5,770.52. The first entry may refer to the completion of fund raising and a substantial portion of the rectory, while the latter may refer to completion of final details and interior furnishings.

Both the church and the rectory are the work of J. Cleveland Cady, an important 19th century architect whose large body of work includes many significant buildings throughout New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. (20) He is also the architect of the church in nearby Alpine, where he maintained a summer home (no longer extant).

Born in 1837 in Providence, Rhode Island, Cady was educated at Trinity College, where he was also awarded an honorary LL degree in 1900. He gained his early technical experience by working with a German professor of architecture, and later for the important New York firm of Town and Davis. In 1868 he opened his own practice, and by 1881 was working in partnership with architects Louis Berg and Milton See. The title of the firm was changed to Cady, Berg and See in 1893.

The design of institutional buildings occupied Cady throughout his career, his scope encompassing a range of projects from museums to churches to college dormitories. One of his earliest commissions, the Brooklyn Academy of Design, was executed in the Victorian Gothic style, a style which Cady favored during the early years of his career, and which he later abandoned in favor of the more simple, massive Romanesque. These later works reveal the strong influence of the work of H. H. Richardson, a leading contemporary.

In addition to the Brooklyn Academy of Design, Cady's public works include the former Metropolitan Opera House (1881-1883; rebuilt by Carrere & Hastings in 1903, demolished); the south wing of the American Museum of Natural History (1891-1908); several buildings for the Presbyterian Hospital, Madison Avenue, New

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York; the New York Skin and Cancer Hospital, the Hudson Street Hospital (1894); and the Barron Library of Woodbridge, NJ (1877).

Cady also made significant contributions to the campuses of several leading colleges and universities—Yale, Trinity, Williams, and Wesleyan. For these institutions he designed libraries (the Yale library), museums (the Peabody Museum, Yale University), gymnasiums (Wesleyan University), and a multitude of academic buildings and dormitories (Dwight Hall, Berkeley Hall, and the law school at Yale; Morgan Hall, Williams College; Jarvis Hall of Science, Trinity College).

A devout Presbyterian, Cady devoted much of his time to the design of ecclesiastical buildings of various denominations. These works are scattered throughout New York and New Jersey, and include the New York Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, Brooklyn (1889-1892); South Presbyterian Church, Morristown, NJ; St. Andrews Methodist Church, W. 76th Street, New York; Park Avenue Methodist Church, 85th Street and Park Avenue, New York; Webb Memorial Chapel, Madison, NJ; and the Church of the Holy Communion in Norwood. Cady did not always work exclusively in this metropolitan region, however, and in 1886, he executed the Hampton Memorial Church in Virginia.

Cady commonly utilized rusticated stone to create a picturesque surface effect and robust massing. The majority were executed in the Romanesque style; however, the Church of the Holy Communion stands apart from these other ecclesiastical projects, as it was executed in the Gothic mode.

Of all Cady's churches, the Alpine Community Church in Alpine, New Jersey (completed in 1871) is the one most closely related to the Church of the Holy Communion--geographically, chronologically, and stylistically. Located in a neighboring community, the Alpine church preceded the Norwood church by just six years and was probably influential in the selection of Cady as architect for the Church of the Holy Communion.

These two churches are quite similar in appearance: both were constructed of random coursed rubble from local quarries in the rural, English Gothic style, with a single transept arm on the west, and both were ornamented and enhanced by buttresses, stained glass, and crosses on the gables. The differences between the two are relatively minor. In Alpine, Cady created a squared apse, side entry porch, and bell gable, and made use of more pronounced polychromy. In contrast, the Norwood Church has a rounded apse, an axial entrance, and simpler polychromy.

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The rectory of the Church of the Holy Communion is a fine example of the Shingle style, and the only building of its type which is extant in Norwood. Its asymmetric massing, broad sloping gable, clustered windows, and shingled exterior combine to create the picturesque and rustic effect characteristic of the Shingle style and strongly resembles earlier works by H. H. Richardson and McKim, Mead, and White. These precedents include Richardson's W. Watts Sherman House (Newport, RI, 1874), with its triangular gable, coursed rubble ground story, and a long sloping roof pierced by dormers, and McKim, Mead and White's Cyrus McCormick House (Richfield Springs, NY, 1880-81). A similar asymmetry and incorporation of a bulging tower can be observed in the Stoughton House, also by Richardson (Cambridge, MA, 1882-83).

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- 2. "Episcopal Church, A Picturesque Structure, Dedicated 77 Years Ago," Bergen Review, 26 May 1955, p. 10.
- 3. These consist of the Archives, Church of the Holy Communion, Norwood, New Jersey, and the Minutes of the Vestry, Church of the Holy Communion, Norwood, New Jersey, 14 October 1878 17 November 1931.
- 4. Minutes of the Vestry, 7 November 1886.
- 5. Minutes of the Vestry, 7 November 1886.
- 6. Minutes of the Vestry, 10 November 1886.
- 7. Minutes of the Vestry, 5 June 1887.
- 8. Minutes of the Vestry, June 1887.
- 9. Minutes of the Vestry, June 1887.
- 10. Archives, Church of the Holy Communion Norwood, New Jersey.
- 11. Minutes of the Vestry, June 1888.

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- 12. Archives, Church of the Holy Communion, Norwood, New Jersey.
- 13. Archives, Church of the Holy Communion, Norwood, New Jersey.
- 14. Daniel Cohen, "Splendor in Glass," <u>Historic Preservation</u>, July/August 1987, pp. 22-29; H. Weber Wilson, <u>Great Glass in American Architecture</u> (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1986), pp. 54-56, "The Windows of Kirkpatrick Chapel," <u>Rutgers Magazine</u>, May-June 1987, pp. 17-21.
- 15. Archives, Church of the Holy Communion, Norwood, N.J.
- 16. Lamb Studios Brochure, April 1986.
- 17. Virginia Mosley, Telephone interview, 29 July 87. Rita Reif, "The Case of the Vanished Stained-Glass Window," The New York Times, 6 Jan. 1985.
- 18. Minutes of the Vestry, 5 June 1887.
- 19. Minutes of the Vestry, 7 April 1888.
- 20. Andrew Dolkart, "Cady, J.C.," MacMillan Encyclopedia of Architects, 1982 ed., "J. Cleveland Cady, Architect, is Dead," The New York Times, 18 April 1919; Montgomery Schuyler, "The Works of Cady, Berg & See," The Architectural Record, April-June 1897, pp. 517-553; Henry F. and L.C. Rathburn Withey, "Cady, J. Cleveland," in Biographical Dictionary of American Architects, (1956; rpt. Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970).
- 21. Alpine Citizens for Preservation, "Upper Closter" or Alpine Historic District, National Register Nomination, February 1984.
- 22. Vincent Scully Jr., The Shingle Style and the Stick Style, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971).

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