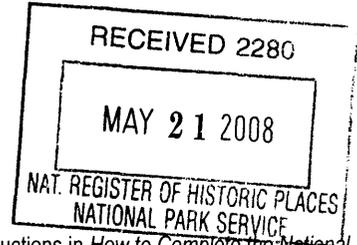


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



### 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 an 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 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

#### 1. Name of Property

Historic name Church of the Assumption and Rectory  
Other name/site number 177-5400-00009

#### 2. Location

Street & number 204 SW 8<sup>th</sup> Street  not for publication  
City or town Topeka  vicinity  
State Kansas Code KS County Shawnee Code 177 Zip code 66603

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ronald G. Loman 5/16/08  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Kansas State Historical Society

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 official /Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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
- other, (explain:)

Edson M. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action 7-2-08

Church of the Assumption and Rectory  
Name of Property

Shawnee, Kansas  
County and State

**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**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
3		total

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter Categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

RELIGION: church-related residence

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: religious facility

RELIGION: church-related residence

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Italian Renaissance

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Reinforced Concrete/Steel

Walls: TERRA COTTA: hollow clay tile; BRICK; STONE: limestone; CERAMIC TILE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Roof: ASPHALT

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

Church of the Assumption and Rectory  
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas  
County and State

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register)

- 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 likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

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

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

#### Period of Significance

1924-1954

#### Significant Dates

1924, 1929, 1954

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

#### Cultural Affiliation

#### Architect/Builder

J. Maurice Carroll; Victor DeFoe; Walter E. Glover

Thomas Williamson

### 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Church of the Assumption and Rectory  
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas  
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	5	2	6	8	3	9	8	4	3	2	5	6	9	1
Zone		Easting						Northing						

2

Zone		Easting						Northing						

3

Zone		Easting						Northing						

4

Zone		Easting						Northing						

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 Christy Davis

Organization Davis Preservation Date February 22, 2008

Street & number 909 1/2 Kansas Ave, Suite 7 Telephone 785-234-5053

City or town Topeka State KS Zip code 66612

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 SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Name Mater Dei Parish/Kansas City Archdiocese

Street & number 204 SW 8th Telephone 785-234-4984

City or town Topeka State KS Zip code 66603

**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.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   1   *Church of the Assumption and Rectory  
Shawnee County, Kansas*

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### Narrative Description

#### Introduction

The Church of the Assumption, completed 1924, and Assumption Rectory, completed 1929, are located at 204 SW 8<sup>th</sup> Street in Topeka (pop. 122,113), Shawnee County, Kansas. The church was constructed as the third church for Topeka's Assumption Parish, the city's first Catholic parish, which originally covered not only the City of Topeka, but all points southwest. The rectory replaced an 1896 parish house. In 1914, the parish's long-held western boundary was established with the establishment of the Holy Name Parish. In 2006, the Assumption Parish was combined with Holy Name Parish to create the consolidated Mater Dei Parish. The Church of the Assumption and the Assumption Rectory is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for architectural significance as examples of the Mission Revival and Renaissance Revival Styles of architecture. The nominated property includes three contributing buildings: the church (1924), rectory (1929), and garage (1954).

#### Setting

The property on which the church and rectory lie was purchased by the Assumption Parish in 1862. In the decades that followed, as Topeka grew from a fledgling western outpost to a bustling state capitol and trade center, the site became increasingly prominent and decreasingly residential. In 1862, founding father and railroad mogul Cyrus K. Holliday donated the 20-acre tract across 8<sup>th</sup> Street to the State of Kansas as the location for the Kansas Statehouse. At the time the Assumption Parish built its first church (1862), statehouse construction had not yet begun. The first church was built to face east toward the Holy Land. By 1882, when the parish built its second church, church leaders decided to face the new church toward the statehouse, then under construction.

Although the church was very closely associated with the downtown business district to its east, the majority of the immediately surrounding property was originally occupied by single-family dwellings. As the downtown business district and state government expanded, many of these dwellings, some occupied by parishioners, have been replaced by commercial, organizational, industrial and institutional buildings. Today, much of the block on which the church and rectory sit is covered by a parking lot which covers the site of a former electric plant.

#### Church Exterior

##### **Overall**

The church is rectangular in massing, with exterior elevations that exhibit symmetry along a north/south axis. The building has a front-gabled roof, which was historically covered with green clay tile, with copper gutters and downspouts. The principal exterior material is buff brick, accented

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2 ***Church of the Assumption and Rectory  
Shawnee County, Kansas***

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with Carthage limestone. The main windows are arch-topped openings filled with stained glass, covered by protective glass.

### ***South (Front) Elevation***

The front elevation is divided into three bays – a central step-gabled bay flanked by two bell-tower bays. The most striking feature of the central bay is its two-story arch-topped stained glass window. Both the window and the main entrance below it are enframed with stepped brick corbelling. The entrance is marked by an inset portico. The arches are simply delineated with brick. Composite pilasters, attached to the fronts of the four brick piers create the illusion of portico-supporting columns. Three simple un-inscribed stone panels separate the portico from the window. Faux buttresses, topped with green clay tile, flank the enframed entrance arch. Above each buttress is a decorative four-piece stone panel. The west panel has a cross. The east panel has a crown of thorns. Decorative basket-weave brickwork outlines the shallow stepped gable. The gable houses a triangular sculpted stone panel of a seated Mary surrounded by standing and kneeling angels. There is a stone parapet cap.

Narrow strips of recessed wall planes, with narrow vertical projections, separate the tower bays from the gabled enframed entrance bay. The tower bays are four stories in height. The first story bases are weighted, with the wall planes stepping back between the first and second floors. There are no openings on the first floors, single slit openings on the second floors, double slit windows and stone panels on the third floors. The belfries, on the fourth level, have stone colonnades. They are topped by domed roofs.

### ***North (Rear) Elevation***

The rear elevation is very simple. The 2 ½ story gabled apse, with its portal louver in the gable and half-round window, projects from the sanctuary wall plane. The one-story sacristy wraps around the apse. It has simple 1/1 windows.

### ***East (Side) Elevation***

The east elevation is divided into four masses: the bell tower, the sanctuary, the transept, and the sacristy. The east elevation of the bell tower has three arched openings with a continuous stone sill on its first floor. There are no openings on the second and third floors. The appearance of the belfry matches that of the north elevation, and all other of its elevations. The principal mass has five bays. The first bay, the vestibule bay, lacks a window opening. However, the other four bays house arch-topped stained-glass windows. The bays are divided by simple projecting bricks and corbelling. A one-story lean-to shelters an entrance on the south side of the transept. The lower cross-gabled transept has a large arch-topped window and brick corbelling and stone parapet cap at the gable. The one-story sacristy mass has a water table of rusticated limestone laid in an ashlar pattern. The water table is topped by a dressed-stone cap.

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# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet

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Shawnee County, Kansas*

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### ***West (Side) Elevation***

The west elevation mirrors the east elevation, with the exception that there is no lean-to shelter. The west elevation nearly abuts the east elevation of the Hayden High School building to its west.

### **Church Interior**

#### ***Overall***

The interior is divided into five spaces: the basement, the vestibule, the sanctuary, the apse, and the sacristy. Character-defining features found throughout the interior include stained original woodwork including beamed ceilings, marble wainscoting, original plaster walls, decorative plasterwork, frescoes, five-paneled wood doors, and decorative stenciling.

#### ***Basement***

The basement houses a fellowship hall built to seat 1000. There is a simple stage on one end and an open kitchen and restrooms on the other end. The space was remodeled after extensive flood damage. Current finish materials include acoustical suspended ceilings, gypsum board and paneling.

#### ***Vestibule***

A centered double door and two smaller doors provide access to the vestibule from the portico. The vestibule has a segmental arch barrel-vaulted ceiling. On the east end of the vestibule's north wall is an opening that provides access to the choir loft/mezzanine stair. This opening has a wrought-iron gate. On the west end of the vestibule's north wall is a door and window opening. The east and west walls have small arch-top stained-glass windows.

#### ***Sanctuary/Transepts***

The sanctuary is a voluminous two-story space with exposed painted wood beams, with brackets painted with heart shapes in red, blue and ivory. Throughout the sanctuary and between the windows on the east and west walls are Stations of the Cross, painted on copper by Topeka artist Arthur L. Tice. The stenciling was completed by Topeka's Clarence Allison and Lawrence's Ernest Geiler. Throughout the church, there are pendant lights with Greek cross designs. The apse arch on the north interior elevation of the sanctuary is flanked by marble side altars, outlined in arched stenciling, and frescoes of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary on the east and Ascension of Christ on the west. Two-story arched openings on the east and west elevations of the sanctuary open to the transepts, which house large arch-topped stained-glass windows and small confessionaries. The confessionary in the east transept is topped by a figure of St. Patrick, which is carried in Topeka's annual St. Patrick's Day parade. The east and west walls of the nave each house four tall narrow arch-topped stained-glass windows. Between and below these windows is marble wainscoting, which was salvaged from the Topeka post office, demolished in 1935. The south wall houses a very large arch-topped window with an inset rose window. There is a choir loft above the vestibule. The railing is half-timbered.

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Shawnee County, Kansas*

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### **Apse**

The apse has a barrel-vaulted ceiling with stenciling accentuating the arches. The junction of the apse and sanctuary is delineated by composite pilasters. Composite marble columns frame the white marble altar. The altar is topped by a sculpture of Christ on the Cross. Above the altar is a half-round stained-glass window depicting the Last Supper.

### **Sacristy**

The one-story sacristy surrounds the apse and is accessible via barrel-vaulted openings on either side of the apse or through doors at the north elevations of the transepts. The east has been somewhat modified to accommodate an elevator that provides access to the fellowship hall in the basement. Other modifications to this space include suspended acoustical tile ceilings. Historic features include wood vestment cases that were ordered in the 1930s.

### **Rectory Exterior**

#### **Overall**

The rectory is hollow clay tile construction clad in buff brick with Carthage limestone details. Like the church, the home is highly symmetrical along a north/south axis. It has rectangular massing with a low-pitched hipped roof, historically clad with green clay tile – now with green composition shingles. The windows are original multi-pane steel casements. Renaissance Revival details include wide overhanging eaves supported by brackets, stone lintels, wrought-iron, arched portico, and sturdy turned railings. The rectory has a garage, constructed in 1954 from plans by Topeka architect Thomas Williamson.

#### **South (Front) Elevation**

The principal feature on the front elevation is the main entrance. One approaches the portico via a centered stair with curved cheek walls. The portico features three equally sized stone arches supported by four delicate columns. Above each of these columns is a round stone medallion. A wrought iron railing stretches between the columns and atop the cheek walls. The portico is flanked on each side by an open terrace, accessible from the west via an exterior stair and from the interior by French doors with half-round carved stone lintels. The terraces have sturdy turned stone railings. The main entrance is located in a canted bay that projects from the plane of the south wall. The entrance has fluted stone trim with a broken pediment. The small windows that flank it have decorative wrought-iron covers.

The roof of the portico provides a floor for the second-story terrace. The terrace is accessed by a centered French door, which is flanked by multi-pane casement windows. Above the French doors that access the open terraces on the east and west ends are two pairs of steel casement windows. Below each of these windows is a decorative non-functional balcony with stone brackets and

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Shawnee County, Kansas*

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wrought-iron railing. The windows and French door on the second floor have a continuous stone lintel, above which is an entablature of basket-weave brickwork interrupted by eave brackets.

### ***North (Rear) Elevation***

The rear elevation has a stoop with wrought-iron railing on its east end. There is a double casement kitchen window on the first floor. Above the stoop, on the second floor, is the north wall of the servant's quarters, with two pairs of casement windows. On the west end, there are two single casement windows and a double casement window on each of the two floors.

### ***East (Side) Elevation***

There are two principal features on the east elevation: a brick and stone chimney on the south end and a dressed stone two-story canted bay with green tile. The bay has three steel casement windows on each of the two floors. It has two small window openings at the water-table level. In addition to the windows in the bay, there are six other windows: two windows with half-round stone lintels on the south end of the first floor. Above each of these, on the second floor, are two smaller multi-pane casement windows. On the first floor of the north end is a triple window with stone hood mold. On the second floor is another window. There are additional small multi-pane windows in the water table.

### ***West (Side) Elevation***

The west elevation has a one-story brick canted bay, pierced by three casement windows. Above each of the windows is a carved-stone panel. On the south end of the west elevation, on each floor, there is a triple casement window. The window on the first level has a decorative stone lintel. There is a smaller window above the canted bay.

### **Rectory Interior**

#### ***Overall***

Like the exterior, the interior of the rectory retains a high degree of integrity. Character-defining features include plaster walls, wood baseboards, wood crown molding, wood door and window trim, cased arched openings, paneled doors, French doors, glass doorknobs, decorative tile fireplaces, wrought-iron railings, and original light fixtures. The floorplan has not changed since the building's original construction in 1929.

#### ***Basement***

A stair in the rectory's northwest corner leads to a basement hall. From the hall, there are six doors leading to a laundry room (historically a storage room), restroom, furnace room, secondary hall, stair to second floor, and janitor's room. The secondary hall leads to spaces originally intended for use as a laundry room, drying room, fruit room, and vault. The woodwork in the basement is

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Shawnee County, Kansas*

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painted. The ceiling in the hall is suspended acoustical tile. The floor in the hall and stair is carpeted.

### **First Floor**

The main entrance from the south portico opens to a small vestibule, which opens to a large reception room. The most prominent feature of the reception room is a sweeping open stair that twists from the first to second floor. The stair has a wrought-iron railing with a wood hand rail. French doors on the reception room's south wall open to the west terrace. Arched French doors on the east wall of the reception room open to the living room in the rectory's southeast corner. The living room has French doors on its south wall that open onto the east terrace. The east wall has a decorative stone fireplace, flanked by casement windows. Above the fireplace are sconces that have the appearance of polychrome wrought-iron. Arched French doors on the north wall of the living room open to the dining room. The dining room's east wall has a three-part archway that opens to a fern room. This room has a tile floor. The dining room has an ornate Mission Style light fixture. A swinging door on the north wall of the dining room opens to the kitchen, which is on the rectory's northeast corner. All of the original kitchen cabinets and linoleum floor are extant. A swinging door on the west side of the kitchen opens to a rear hall. The northwest corner of the rectory houses a rear entry, small restroom, sitting room and office – as well as a second restroom. North of the reception room and west of the grand stair is another office. This office, which is accessible from the reception room and grand stair hall, has a vault in its southeast corner and bay on the west.

### **Second Floor**

The second floor is accessible from the grand stair in the reception room or via a secondary/servants stair in the center of the home. The stairways open onto a winding hall that provides access to the second floor's five bedrooms, two studies, and several closets. The bedroom on the northeast corner was designed as a servant's quarters. A door on the north end of the west wall opens to a private bath, not accessible from the hallway. A door in the southwest corner opens to a closet. Two doors on the east end of the hallway open to a suite meant for priest's quarters. The suite has a study on the building's southeast corner, a bedroom on the north end, and a bathroom in between. There are two closets across the interior hall from the bathroom. The study has a decorative stone fireplace. There is a second suite on the southeast corner of the second floor. This suite has a bedroom and study on the south end, and a bathroom on its north end. French doors in the study in this second suite open to the terrace on the portico's roof deck. There is a guest bedroom with private bath north of the suite's bathroom on the west end of the second floor. The fifth bedroom is located in the home's northwest corner. A semi-private bath is located east of this bedroom.

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*Shawnee County, Kansas*

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## Garage

A blond brick three-car garage lies north of the rectory. The garage is rectangular in massing with a hipped roof whose ridge runs north to south. The front elevation, which faces west, has three garage door openings. The rear (east) elevation has two multi-pane steel windows. The north elevation is solid brick with no window openings. The south elevation has one multi-pane steel window. The garage was designed with a clay-tile roof to match that of the house. Today, the roof is topped with composite shingles.

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# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet

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Shawnee County, Kansas*

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### Statement of Significance

#### Introduction

The Church of the Assumption Catholic Church and Rectory in Topeka, Kansas is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for architectural significance. The church is an example of Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival Style. The rectory is an example of Renaissance Revival Style.

#### A Brief History of Catholic Church and Catholic Settlement in Kansas

The Catholic Church first established a Kansas presence in ca. 1542, when Father Juan de Padilla returned to the area to evangelize to the Wichita Indians after accompanying Coronado on his Quivira expedition. Padilla's mission work was cut short in 1544 when he was killed in New Mexico.<sup>1</sup>

By the early Eighteenth Century, Europeans had established cultural and financial ties with Indian peoples West of the Mississippi. Early explorers, trappers and traders cemented these ties through intermarriage. French explorer Captain M. Etienne Venyard de Bourgmont began trading in what would become northeast Kansas in 1724. In 1762, the region came under the control of Spain, also a Catholic monarchy, until it transferred to France in 1800. After the United States gained control of the territory under the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, French Catholics maintained a presence in the place that would later become Kansas. In their famed expedition through the newly acquired territory, Lewis and Clark encountered French trappers on the Kansas River. Such trappers sold their wares at French trading posts established by the Chouteau, De Munn, and Sublette families.

After the Indian Removal Act of 1830 forced native peoples west of the Mississippi River onto reservations in what would become Kansas and Oklahoma, many religious organizations established missions, with the aim of educating and assimilating the Indians. The Catholic Church alone established six Indian missions in the pre-Territorial period. The first of these, founded in 1836, was the Kickapoo Catholic Mission, located at the Kickapoo Landing north of Fort Leavenworth, which had been established in 1827. The Kickapoo Mission was followed by three missions to the Pottawatomie Indians, including one at St. Mary's; a mission to the Miami Tribe; and a mission to the Osage Tribe in St. Paul.<sup>2</sup>

Two short decades after Indian Removal, the Kansas-Nebraska Act opened the territory to permanent white settlement. A good number of the early white settlers were northern Protestants who came to Kansas to ensure the territory would enter the Union as a free state. However, the Catholic Church flourished, particularly in areas where it had established a presence during the pre-

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<sup>1</sup> Padilla is known as the United States' first martyr, or protomartyr.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Blackmar, *Kansas: A Cyclopedia of State History* (Chicago: Standard Publishing Company, 1912).

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Shawnee County, Kansas***

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Territorial period. In the first decades of statehood, the majority of the state's Catholics, particularly German and Irish immigrants, were concentrated in the cities of Leavenworth, Lawrence, and Topeka. By 1855, Leavenworth was home to seven Catholic families, prompting the Kickapoo Mission clergy to move from north of Fort Leavenworth to town. Leavenworth, the state's first and largest city, was a Catholic center from the beginning. It was there that the Sisters of Charity, founded 1858, opened St. Mary's Academy – and where the state's first cathedral, consecrated in 1868, was built.<sup>3</sup> In 1877, Leavenworth was named headquarters for the state's first Catholic diocese.

Atchison was also home to many Catholic institutions established by Benedictine Monks and Sisters. The Benedictines, who first established a presence in Doniphan, later established a priory and college at Atchison. They established Benedictine College in 1868 and Mount St. Scholastica Academy for Girls, later Mount St. Scholastica College, in 1863.

Louis Fink, who had been prior at the Benedictine Monastery at Atchison, went on to become the first Bishop of the Diocese of Leavenworth.<sup>4</sup> Bishop Fink played a crucial role in the expansion and success of the Catholic Church in Kansas. Among his efforts to encourage the Church's growth was his involvement in marketing railroad trust lands to immigrants. An 1873 handbook for Irish immigrants included a letter of introduction from the Bishop.<sup>5</sup> During the 1870s and 1880s, many Irish immigrants came to Kansas to work as laborers for the growing number of railroad companies.

Railroad companies also marketed trust land to Germans and German-Russians. Among the German-Russian immigrants were Catholic Volga Germans, who in the Eighteenth Century had accepted an invitation by Catherine the Great to escape military service in Germany to settle in Russia's scarcely populated Volga region. In the early 1870s, when a policy change left Germans subject to military conscription, hundreds of Volga German and Mennonite families immigrated to Kansas.

To facilitate church organization and promote a sense of community, Bishop Fink encouraged Catholic immigrants to settle in groups.<sup>6</sup> Among the state's Catholic enclaves were Solomon, an enclave between Abilene and Salina, home to 100 Irish immigrants and the seat of a Catholic parish that extended west to Ft. Hays. In addition was St. Mark's, a German Catholic community and seat of a parish that extended west from Sedgwick County into Reno County.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Local Catholic Church History and Catholic Ancestors of Kansas, [http://home.att.net/~Local\\_Catholic/CatholicUS-KansascityKS.htm#Dioceses](http://home.att.net/~Local_Catholic/CatholicUS-KansascityKS.htm#Dioceses)

<sup>4</sup> For more information on Bishop Fink, see Catholic Encyclopedia.

<sup>5</sup> James Shortridge, *Peopling the Plains: Who Settled Where in Frontier Kansas* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 112.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 97.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 112.

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Some Volga Germans settled in cities, including Topeka, where they built St. Joseph's Church. However, most who began arriving in 1876, concentrated in rural northwest Kansas, particularly in Ellis and Rush Counties where they quickly built elaborate limestone churches at Victoria (also Herzog), Ellis, Schoenen, Pfeifer, and Hays. In 1878, Bishop Fink appealed to the Capuchin Fathers, from an order of German immigrants headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to serve the growing number of Volga German Catholics who had colonized northwest Kansas.<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately, the Catholic trend of settling in clusters left Catholics, particularly German Catholics, susceptible to the prejudices of their Protestant neighbors. For decades, German Catholics, living in all-German farming communities, conducted business and worshiped in their native tongue. Despite their decades-long ties to Kansas, these immigrants and, by then, their American-born grown children, were targeted by narrow-minded American "natives" whose suspicions only grew when the United States declared war on Germany in World War I. In 1918, German baker Robert Prager was lynched in Illinois for speaking German. Many shops in Kansas displayed signs warning German-Americans to speak English or "go home."<sup>9</sup>

Anti-German and anti-Catholic sentiment did not cease when the war was over. In fact, it escalated in the early 1920s after anti-immigration and anti-Catholic nativists succeeded in organizing. Anti-Catholic fervor was so strong that U. S. Vice President Charles Curtis (1860-1936), a Topeka native who had been baptized by Jesuits at St. Mary's mission, was forced to respond to detractors by denying his Catholic heritage.<sup>10</sup> The most disturbing development was the re-constitution of the Ku Klux Klan. Originally organized by former Confederate soldiers who resisted Post-Civil-War Reconstruction, the KKK rose again in 1915 with the release of the KKK-glorifying film *Birth of a Nation*. By the early 1920s, there were as many as 200,000 KKK members in Kansas – nearly twice the number of Kansas Catholics at the time.<sup>11</sup> When the Catholic mayor of Liberty refused to allow the Klan to use a hall he owned, the Klan kidnapped and assaulted him.<sup>12</sup> In 1925, after famed editor William Allen White ran for Governor on an anti-KKK platform, Kansas became the first state to successfully oust the KKK by denying the organization a charter.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> B. M. Dreiling, *Golden Jubilee of the German-Russian Settlements of Ellis and Rush Counties, Kansas* (Hays, KS: *Ellis County News*, 1926), 32.

<sup>9</sup> Robert F. Zeidel, *Immigrants, Progressives, and Exclusion Politics: The Dillingham Commission, 1900-1927* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> *Assumption 1962 Centennial Book*, 13. Charles Curtis, a Native American, argued that although he was baptized into the Catholic Church, he was raised by his Protestant paternal grandparents.

<sup>11</sup> William Connelley, "Catholic Church," *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1918).

<sup>12</sup> "Klan Painting," Cool Things, Kansas State Historical Society. Online resource, accessed 2/1/08, [www.kshs.org/cool2/klan.htm](http://www.kshs.org/cool2/klan.htm).

<sup>13</sup> Craig Miner, *Kansas: A History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 252-253.

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Despite the threats, the Church thrived in the 1920s and the decades that followed. In 1923, church leaders expanded Leavenworth's St. Mary's Academy into a two-year junior college, St. Mary College. The College became a four-year institution in 1932. Parishes also constructed at least 25 new churches in the 1920s.<sup>14</sup> Like many churches, the Catholic Church experienced a period of significant growth in the post-war years. To accommodate an increasing number of school-aged children, many parishes constructed new school buildings or constructed additions to existing schools.

Over the years, the state's growing number of Catholic parishioners required the establishment of new Dioceses. In 1887, the Leavenworth Diocese (later moved to Kansas City), which until then covered the entire state, was divided into three dioceses, with new dioceses headquartered in Concordia (later moved to Salina) and Wichita.<sup>15</sup> In 1951, the Wichita Diocese was divided and the Dodge City Diocese was created. Northeast Kansas now falls under the Kansas City Archdiocese. Northwest Kansas lies in the Salina Diocese, which dedicated a new cathedral in 1953.

### **History of Assumption Parish**

The Assumption Parish was established in 1862 by missionaries from nearby St. Mary's, Kansas who operated a Pottawatomie Mission there from 1842 to 1869. Before 1862, the Catholic faith was well-represented by Topeka's founding families, including the Pappans. Cousins of French Fur traders the Chouteaus and ancestors of Vice President Charles Curtis, the Pappans were known as the operators of the Kansas River ferry from 1842 until the first permanent bridge was built in 1865.

Lawrence priest J. Schact held services for these early Topeka Catholics at Episcopal Hall. In late 1860, Father Schact invited the city's Catholics to meet at the home of Edward McGinnis with the aim of organizing a new parish. These founding members committed themselves to building a church. By the end of 1862, they had purchased property at the northwest corner of 8th Avenue and Jackson, and completed a 32' X 50' church building, erected at a cost of \$2000. Following tradition, this first church faced east toward the homeland of Christ.

In the 1860s, Assumption Parish had no defined territory. Because there was no formal Catholic presence to its southwest, the fledgling parish established missions in both nearby communities, like Tecumseh and far-flung outposts, like Cottonwood Falls.<sup>16</sup> In 1869, the Sisters of Charity, based in Leavenworth, established the first Parish School.

<sup>14</sup> Historic Property Inventory, Cultural Resources Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

<sup>15</sup> Mary Frances Lahey, *Harvest of Faith: History of the Diocese of Salina* (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1987), 26.

<sup>16</sup> The Assumption Parish had missions at Big Springs, Centerville, Grasshopper Falls, Indianola, Indian Mill, Ozawkie, Ridgeway, Tecumseh, Twin Mounds, One Hundred and Ten, Newman, Burlingame, Kaw, Carbondale, Osage City, Lyndon, Dover, Neosho Rapids, Emporia, Reading, Florence and Cottonwood Falls.

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By the early 1880s, the parish was educating 200 students and ministering to 1762 members, 10% of Topeka's population. Having outgrown its first church, the parish committed to constructing its second church building. The new building, a 55' X 125' brick and stone edifice, was completed in 1882 at a cost of \$20,000. After completing the church, the parish remodeled the original church building to house its growing school. As the community's Catholic population continued to grow, two new Catholic churches were constructed. In 1883, Assumption Parish built a new church in North Topeka. The North Topeka church included a school for the city's African-American children, whose numbers had exploded following the post-reconstruction black exodus. In 1887, the diocese established a second parish in Topeka, St. Joseph's Parish, founded to minister to the city's growing number of German-speaking Catholics.

Having completed its first permanent church building in 1882, Assumption Parish was poised to weather the economic storm that marked the waning years of the Nineteenth Century. However, as soon as the economy improved in the early Twentieth Century, the parish initiated an ambitious construction program. In 1907, the parish dedicated a new convent, which was built on the site of a defunct seminary that had been established in 1866. In 1909, when a fire caused damage to the 1882 church, the parish was forced to make \$5000 in repairs. Just two short years later, they hired Topeka architect Frank Squires to design a building for the new Assumption High School.

Despite these many improvements, Assumption Parish was unable to meet the needs of Topeka's growing Catholic population. In 1914, the diocese established a third Topeka Parish, Holy Name Parish, which served the needs of the 250 Catholic families west of Topeka Boulevard. As the city's growing number of residential neighborhoods pushed westward, the diocese established a fourth parish, Sacred Heart Parish in 1921. The creation of these new parishes slowed Assumption's membership growth.

When Sacred Heart Parish was established in 1921, Assumption's 1882 church adequately met the parish's needs. The parish had been able to repair the church after the 1909 fire. However, a 1922 fire, which caused \$16,000 worth of damage, rendered the building structurally unsound. Beginning in late October, 1922, the church was demolished. The parish completed its new church, still extant, in 1924 (see below for more details on the construction).

Even as contractors put the finishing touches on the church's interior, the parish planned and commenced additional projects. In 1929, they razed an 1896 parish house and replaced it with the existing rectory. In 1939, the parish joined forces with other Topeka parishes to construct Capitol Catholic High School, renamed Hayden High School in 1946, constructing a new building west of Assumption Church. The high school purchased property near 6<sup>th</sup> and Gage Avenues in for a gymnasium and athletic fields in 1949. With the first wave of baby boomers entering high school in the late 1950s, Hayden quickly outgrew its 1939 building, forcing the construction of a new school

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building on the Gage Avenue site, thereafter dubbed "Hayden West." For decades, Freshmen and Sophomores attended Hayden High School, while Juniors and Seniors, attended classes at Hayden West.

Elementary Schools had less time to react to the baby boom. It was not until 1950, as the first wave of baby boomers entered kindergarten, that the parish began raising funds for a new school and convent. Construction on the \$231,750 project began in 1952. The parish's demographics were changing rapidly in the postwar years, when many young families moved to subdivisions on the city's western, southern and eastern outskirts. Among these was the Highland Park neighborhood, where a growing population ushered in the creation of the St. Matthews Parish in 1955. While some families moved elsewhere by choice, others left involuntarily when urban renewal forced everyone who lived between Kansas Avenue and the Santa Fe Railroad from their homes. A 1962 book celebrating the parish's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary noted that "Some of the families had been in the parish sixty and seventy years and one individual, Miss Agnes Heery, was born in the home in which she had lived continuously since May 18, 1882, until compelled to leave."

In 2001, when Hayden West completed a multi-million dollar addition to its 1962 building, Freshman students, the last high school students moved to the Hayden West campus. In 2001, Topeka developer H. T. Paul remodeled the original high school building for office space. As the number of parishioners continued to dwindle, the diocese consolidated Assumption and Holy Name Parishes to create the Mater Dei Parish in 2006. Since then, Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> graders have attended school at the former Holy Name parish school while 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders have attended school at the former Assumption parish school.<sup>17</sup>

Well-known parishioners included Governor Joan Finney, the state's first woman governor, who was raised and married in the church.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Assumption Church (1924)**

When a September 13, 1922 fire wreaked havoc on the 1882 building, parishioners had initially hoped to restore it, as they had done after a 1909 fire. But when the fire marshal deemed the building unsafe, the parish made plans to replace the building altogether. Before contractors began demolishing the unsafe structure, the parish's architect had drawn up schematic designs for its replacement. The newspaper announced that the new building would be constructed in the "Romanesque" Style, with a basement auditorium to seat 1000 people, open-beam construction with beams "stained in oils" to "contrast with rough plaster walls," and stations of the cross in terra cotta. In 1922, the parish estimated that the building would be built at a cost of \$100,000.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Assumption Centennial Book.*

<sup>18</sup> Assumption Research File.

<sup>19</sup> "Assumption Church to be Built to Stand 200 Years," Catholic Clippings, Kansas State Historical Society.

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To design its new church, the parish hired the Kansas City architecture firm of Carroll and Defoe. Throughout his prolific career, J. Maurice Carroll (1898-1991) designed more than 160 hospitals, schools and churches. From a young age, Carroll was primed to make his mark in the field of architecture. In collaboration with Thomas Edison, his father Martin Carroll broke new ground in the development of reinforced concrete construction. Although J. Maurice Carroll was only in his early 20s when he designed Assumption Church, he had already tasted professional success, winning an American Institute of Architects (AIA) medal for his design of St. Vincent's Church in Kansas City in 1922. Among other designs of note were five buildings at Leavenworth's St. Mary's College and the mother house for the Sisters of Charity, which supplied teachers for Assumption's schools.<sup>20</sup>

At the time he designed the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival Assumption Church, Carroll was partnered with Victor J. Defoe (1892-1975).<sup>21</sup> Defoe, who was of Canadian descent, was born in Mexico, where his father was a railroad auditor. According to city directories, Defoe was living on his own from a young age in Kansas City, where he worked as a store clerk and, by the age of 16, for the American Sash, Door and Fixture Company. At the end of his 11-year tenure at American Sash, Defoe moonlighted as a residential architect. When he left the company after 11 years, Defoe went to work as a draftsman for the J. C. Nichols Company, the company that developed the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival Country Club Plaza. It is likely that his experience with the J. C. Nichols Company informed Defoe's work on Assumption Church. After completing the design for Assumption Church, Defoe and Carroll parted ways.<sup>22</sup>

On September 9, 1923, less than one year after the 1882 church was destroyed by fire, parishioners attended the cornerstone ceremony for the new church. At the time of the cornerstone laying, Father Patrick McInerney announced that the church would be dedicated the following January. But, like many construction projects, the construction of the Church of the Assumption was beset by delays and cost overruns, which postponed the construction and raised the final cost to \$130,000. The congregation did not celebrate its first mass in the building until August 1924. On November 27, 1924, Thanksgiving Day, the church was finally dedicated as a "home for God." Given the future consolidation of the two parishes, it is noteworthy that the dedication mass was sung by "a joint choir composed of members of the Assumption and Holy Name churches." The list of those present included three bishops and 38 other clergy.<sup>23</sup>

Like that of many ornate buildings, the construction of the Church of the Assumption continued long after the building's dedication. Although original plans for the installation of the old church's bell into the new building, its familiar toll did not ring again until August 1927, when the parish constructed a

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<sup>20</sup> "Le Mans Hall,"

<sup>21</sup> Social Security Death Index.

<sup>22</sup> "Victor J. DeFoe," in "Westheight Architects" an online resource related to Kansas City's Westheight Historic District, <http://westheight.tripod.com/architects.html>, accessed 4 Feb 2008.

<sup>23</sup> "Church Erected Not as Home for Man, But God," *Topeka Capital* 28 November 1924.

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steel tower to house it. In the 1930s, craftsmen went about decorating the church's interior. When the postal service demolished Topeka's historic post office in anticipation of the construction of its replacement, the parish salvaged the marble and hired Lardner Stone to install it in the church. Additional 1930s embellishments were described in the newspaper:

*The walls of the nave and transepts are painted a dark buff with broad bands of light brown around the windows, and the arches leading into the transepts. These brown bands are decorated with stenciled designs in darker brown and blue. Extending from the floor to the base of the windows is a wainscoting of white marble ... most of the marble came from the lobby of the old postoffice [sic] in Topeka. It was purchased while the old federal building was torn down ... The sanctuary arch is decorated in rose, blue and gold, with bands of conventional flat stenciling. Real gold leaf was used in the work. The wall expanse behind the Crucifix above the main altar, has a rose background with white stenciling in rich flat design. The wall around the small lunette window under the sanctuary arch has a blue background with white stenciling. The stained glass of the window depicts the Last Supper. Above the two small altars are round-topped panels having lavender backgrounds with stenciled designs in gold. The panels have broad borders of lavender with a continuous vine motif stenciled in white ... The Stations of the Cross came from Munich, Bavaria. They are painted on copper in rich, harmonious colors. The railing along the choir loft in the back of the church is a series of panels having backgrounds of dark blue, dark rose and lavender, all richly stenciled in flat design ... The decorations other than the paintings are by Clarence Allison, of Topeka, and Ernest Geiler, of Lawrence, Kan.<sup>24</sup>*

### **Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival Architecture**

The Mission and Spanish Colonial Revival Styles took their cues from Spanish Colonial Architecture, which proliferated in Spanish territory in the New World. Mission and Spanish Colonial Revival were among the many revival styles that surged in the 1910s and 1920s, particularly as California sought its own architectural identity. Spanish Colonial Revival Architecture peaked in the early 1920s, when Kansas City developer J. C. Nichols and his architect Edward Buehler Delk chose the style for the nation's first suburban shopping center, the Country Club Plaza. Character-defining features include blond brick, stucco, clay-tile roofs, arched openings, wide overhanging eaves, contrasting materials, towers and domes.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> "Description of Newly Redecorated Assumption Church" Catholic Clippings, V. 2, pg. 52, Kansas State Historical Society.

<sup>25</sup> John C. Poppeliers and S. Allen Chambers, Jr., *What Style is It: A Guide to American Architecture* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2003), 20-25.

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### **The Assumption Rectory (1929) and Garage (1954)**

While the parish placed the final interior touches on the new church, it began laying plans for a new parish house. Assumption's existing rectory had been constructed in 1896 at a cost of \$5000. Topeka architect Walter E. Glover (1889-1969) was charged with designing a rectory that would complement the new church. Glover's plans called for a \$40,000 structure of hollow clay tile construction adorned in buff brick, Carthage limestone, and green clay tile.

The Assumption Rectory was one of a number of Renaissance Revival Topeka homes that Glover designed. During his long career, which spanned over the first half of the Twentieth Century, Glover designed many educational, governmental and residential buildings. These included several county courthouses and many commercial buildings in downtown Topeka. Among his best-known designs are those for Topeka's Westboro Mart, inspired by Kansas City's Country Club Plaza, and the Renaissance Revival home of Tinkham Veale.<sup>26</sup>

### ***Renaissance-Revival Architecture***

The Assumption Rectory is an excellent example of the Renaissance Revival Style, a form that flourished from 1870 to 1930. Architecturally related to the Italianate Style, which was common in late Nineteenth Century commercial and residential architecture, Renaissance Revival was more frequently applied to institutional architecture. The style surged during the Roaring 1920s, when it was applied to palatial Nuevo Riche homes.

Renaissance Revival has its roots in Renaissance Architecture and inspired by the Fifteenth-Century designs of Italian architect Filippo Brunelleschi. Brunelleschi and his contemporaries applied the Renaissance Style to cathedrals, chapels, libraries, and palaces. Character-defining features included porticos and arcades supported by light columns with composite capitals, capitals with a combination of ionic volutes and Corinthian leaves. Other common features include low-pitched hipped roofs, arched openings, sturdy turned stone railings, prominent window moulds, decorative entablatures, pediments, eave brackets, tile roofs, and clerestories.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Mark Burenheide, National Register nomination for Tinkham-Veale Building, Topeka, Kansas.

<sup>27</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 396-407.

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### Verbal Boundary Description

LOTS 62 THR 72 (EVEN) EXC PART LOT 62 DAF W 2' N 52' S 75' & ALSO LOTS 229 THRU 239 & VAC ALLEY ADJ TO LOTS. The nominated property includes the property occupied by the church, rectory and garage.

### Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the property occupied by the church, rectory and garage.

### Photo Log

1. Exterior, Front Elevations of Church and Rectory, Looking Northwest from the Southeast.
2. Exterior, Church, Front Elevation of Church.
3. Exterior, Church, East Elevation from the Southeast.
4. Exterior, Church, Rear Elevation, Looking Southeast from the Northwest.
5. Interior, Church, Sanctuary and Altar, Looking North from the South.
6. Interior, Church, Sanctuary and Choir Loft, Looking South from the North.
7. Interior, Church, Sanctuary and Choir Loft, Looking Southeast from the Northwest.
8. Interior, Church, Altar, Looking North from the South.
9. Interior, Church, Basement Fellowship Hall.
10. Exterior, Rectory, Front Elevation, Looking North from the South.
11. Exterior, Rectory, East Elevation, Looking Northwest from Southeast.
12. Interior, Rectory, Main Stair in Reception Room, Looking North from South.
13. Interior, Rectory, Living Room, Looking Southeast.
14. Interior, Rectory, Dining Room Arcade, Looking East.
15. Interior, Rectory, Dining Room Light Fixture.
16. Interior, Rectory, Art Deco Light Fixture.



Church of the Assumption  
 & Rectory  
 Shawnee Co, KS  
 Zone 15  
 26 83 98 E  
 43 25 69 1 N

4326  
 T 11 S  
 T 12 S  
 2'30"  
 EAST TOPEKA INTERCHANGE 0.3 MI.  
 4323  
 INTERCHANGE 20 MI.  
 U.S. 69 & 169 57 MI.