

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received FEB 1 1983
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic St. John's Episcopal Church

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 400 North Water Street not for publication

city, town Sparta vicinity of

state Wisconsin code 55 county Monroe code 081

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Episcopal Diocese of Eau Claire

street & number 510 Farwell Street

city, town Eau Claire vicinity of state Wisconsin 54701

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Monroe County Courthouse

street & number 418 West Main Street

city, town Sparta state Wisconsin 54656

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1975 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street

city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The present St. John's Episcopal Church includes the original cross-plan board-and-batten church, with 1920s¹ parish hall and pastor's apartment attached to the rear (west and south). Although the additions and extensions thereto were made in material, scale, and form sympathetic to the church, they are not considered to contribute to the nomination. The one-story church building is covered by a composition-shingle cross-gable roof, intersected on the southeast slope by a small projecting gable-roof baptistry. The front (east) gable is prefaced by a lower gable-roof narthex and topped by a gabled bellcote with blind arched opening.

The principal entrance, centered in the projecting narthex, is composed of paneled-wood double doors and divided triangular tympanum/transom. The north and south gable ends are lighted by a single tall lancet window each. The walls of the nave (east) and transept (north and south arms) are set with three lancets each; in the baptistry, the center lancet is flanked by shorter, thinner ones to the sides. The low foundation is of cut stone.

The interior of the church has received several substantial renovations since its 1863 construction. Although the cross plan remains, the chancel (west arm) was enlarged in 1896;² simultaneously, the gambrel-form ceilings were covered with dark-stained Georgia pine. (Oral tradition holds that the original ceiling was trussed.) In 1960, the ceilings were covered with accoustical tile, the 1866 high altar was remodeled and moved to the north transept and replaced by a movable altar table, and the pews in the nave (east arm) were replaced. Wall surfaces are currently painted plaster. The transept and nave windows were filled with replacement stained leaded glass in 1926;³ leaded glass in the baptistry windows appears to be older (perhaps dating to the nineteenth century), and the amber glass in the narthex and tympanum over the entrance may be original. The organ pipes (behind the chancel) were installed in 1927. Donated furnishings and fixtures include a Gothic Revival bishop's chair and credence table.

¹The work was conducted during the pastorate of Rev. Walter George Horn, who was appointed in 1921.

²Meeting records of St. John's Guild, p. 44.

³Records of St. John's Church.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1863¹ **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Standing in its original form (as the antecedent to later sympathetic additions), St. John's Episcopal Church is a fine representative of the Gothic Revival period of construction. The design is one of the simplest and earliest of its type known in the state, lacking the mannerisms and pretensions of later Victorian types.

In form, St. John's Episcopal Church resembles early Gothic Revival church designs of the 1850s-70s published by proponents like A. J. Downing and Richard Upjohn, although no specific precedent could be found for the design. Historic photos and newspaper articles document lost Gothic Revival and "Carpenter's Gothic" churches and residences in Sparta, in addition to a few extant examples in the city. Of the known examples, only St. John's Church has the simplicity of the early Gothic Revival: the cruciform plan; board-and-batten exterior; and gabled bellcote, baptistry, and narthex and nave. The design illustrates both the directness and picturesque effect of the style.

Prior to construction of a parish church, Episcopal services were held in the 1850s in the Union Block or old Methodist church in Sparta. St. John's parish could be said to date from 1859, when the visit by Bishop Jackson Kemper was recorded in a parish register. The first Sunday school was held in 1860; a lot was purchased in 1861; and construction of the church began in 1862.² In 1863, with the completion of the church building, the parish was formally organized; the building itself was consecrated in 1879.³

At one hundred twenty years of age, St. John's Episcopal Church is the oldest surviving religious structure in the city of Sparta.

¹R.A. Richards, History of Monroe Co., Wisconsin, 1912, p. 332; Merton G. Eberlein, "History of the Diocese of Eau Claire, 1928-1978," p. 15; "St. John's Episcopal Church, One Hundred Years," 1963.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Eberlein, Merton G., "History of the Diocese of Eau Claire, 1928-1978," Mauston, 1978.
 Richards, Ralph A., History of Monroe County, Wis., C. F. Cooper & Co., Chicago, 1912.
 "St. John's Episcopal Church, One Hundred Years," Sparta, 1963

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one
 Quadrangle name Sparta Quadrangle scale 1:62,500

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u>	B	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

A rectangular parcel of land, 83 feet N-S and 175 feet E-W, whose south edge corresponds with the center line of Pearl Street, and whose east edge corresponds with the west edge of N. Water Street.

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

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Diane H. Filipowicz/Architectural Historian (Continued)
 organization State Historical Society of Wisconsin date November 1982
 street & number 816 State Street telephone (608) 262-2732
 city or town Madison state Wisconsin

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Richard Henry
 title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin date 1/24/83

For NPS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.
[Signature] date 3/4/83
 Keeper of the National Register
 Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

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

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

St. John's Episcopal Church, Sparta, Monroe Co., Wisconsin

Continuation sheet

Item number 11

Page 1

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date entered

Form Prepared By

Research Assistance By:

Julia E. Middleman
511 So. L. Street
Sparta, Wisconsin 54656

June 1982
(608) 269-3034